KINGS AND CULTS

State Formation and Legitimation in India and Southeast Asia



HERMANN KULKE

Kings and Cults contains a selection of articles of H. Kulke on various aspects of *Kṣatra* and *Kṣetra*, the interconnected domains of temporal and sacred power in medieval India and Southeast Asia. Thematically these papers are intertwined by a study of the quest of medieval rulers for legitimation through religious institutions. Of particular interest in this regard are the changing modes of legitimation at different stages of state formation, ranging from princely patronage of tribal deities by early emerging "kings" to the construction of imperial temples by the rulers of the great regional "imperial" kingdoms. A particularly characteristic feature of India is the great temple cities as centres of regional cults and pilgrimage which became the major focus of later medieval royal patronage. Another important aspect of Kulke's work is historiography as a means of late medieval royal legitimation, linking legendary history of these sacred places and royal patronage with dynastic claims.

About half of the papers focus on Puri in Orissa and its Jagannātha cult which forms a major field of Kulke's studies. South India is represented by two papers on religious policy of the Cōḷas and the early rulers of Vijayanagara. Four papers deal with Southeast Asia. They reveal that Southeast Asian indigenous rulers faced very similar structural and ideological problems which they tried to solve through similar ritual means as their contemporary Indian "colleagues".

Rs. 400

KINGS AND CULTS

State Formation and Legitimation in India
and Southeast Asia

Perspectives in History

General Editors
B.N. Goswamy
Ravinder Kumar
Dietmar Rothermund

- Vol. I. Dietmar Rothermund: *Asian Trade and European Expansion in the Age of Mercantilism.*
- Vol. II. Dietmar Rothermund: *The Indian Economy Under British Rule and other Essays.*
- Vol. III. Kapil Kumar: *Peasantş in Revolt: Tenants, Landlords, Congress and the Raj in Oudh, 1886-1992.*
- Vol. IV. Ravinder Kumar: *The Making of a Nation: Essays in Indian History and Politics.*
- Vol. V. Dietmar Rothermund: *Mahâtma Gandhi: An Essay in Political Biography.*
- Vol. VI. Dietmar Rothermund: *India in the Great Depression, 1929-1939.*
- Vol. VII. Hermann Kulke: *Kings and Cults: State Formation and Legitimation in India and Southeast Asia.*

KINGS AND CULTS

State Formation and Legitimation in India and Southeast Asia

HERMANN KULKE



MANOHAR
1993

ISBN 81-7304-037-0

First Published 1993

Published by
Ajay Kumar Jain
Manohar Publishers & Distributors
2/6, Ansari Road, Daryaganj
New Delhi - 110 002

Printed at
Rajkamal Electric Press
G.T. Kamal Road
Delhi - 110 033

For

Uschi, Annette
Roland and Tilmann

Contents

Preface

The present volume contains a selection of articles published over a period of more than twenty years on various aspects of *Kṣatra* and *Kṣetra*, the inter-related domains of temporal and sacred power in medieval India and Southeast Asia. About half of the papers focus on Orissa and Puri with its Jagannātha cult. South India is represented by two contributions on the religious policy of the Cōḷas and the early rulers of Vijayanagara and four papers deal with Southeast Asia with particular emphasis on Angkor and Indonesia.

Thematically these papers are connected by the study of the quest of medieval rulers for legitimation through religious institutions. Whereas in earlier periods rulers derived religious legitimation of their authority through the performance of grand royal sacrifices, the early Middle Ages witnessed a decisive shift towards royal patronage of local or regional cults. This development was deeply influenced by the emergence of the bhakti cults as the new genuine folk religion. Politically perhaps even more important, however, were the strong local and regional roots of these cults. The spatial connotation of the cults, radiating from their sacred place, vested the newly emerging local and regional states with an additional dimension of territoriality. Of particular interest in this regard are the changing modes of legitimation at different stages of state formation, ranging from princely patronage of tribal deities by emerging early rājās to the construction of imperial temples by rulers of the great early medieval "imperial" regional kingdoms. During the late Middle Ages royal ritual policy shifted its emphasis to royal patronage of places of pilgrimage and their cults and sectarian leaders.

Puri's Jagannātha cult provides an excellent example in the intrinsic relations between the emergence of a great regional kingdom under the Eastern Gaṅgas and of a regional cult. One of the most fascinating aspect of the Jagannātha cult is its relationship with tribal cults as still manifested in the unorthodox wooden figures of Puri's divine trinity. In order to trace the origin and early development of the Jagannātha cult which is still "shrouded in mystery", extensive comparative studies of the tutelary deities of early royal dynasties and of the late medieval princely states in Puri's hinterland have been undertaken, the results of which are included in several papers of the present volume. They reveal a clearly discernible pattern of a

synchronous rise of formerly tribal chieftains and of local deities to translocal and, more rarely, to regional importance. The dominant position of the Jagannātha cult in Orissa and Eastern India appears to have been based on the fact that its early development followed exactly this pattern of development till it finally became the tutelary deity of a mighty dynasty. Under the royal patronage its *kṣetra* became one of India's most important centres of pilgrimage, thus spreading the fame of its royal donors even beyond their temporal realm. Their strong affinity with the cult enabled them to denounce political opposition as treason (*droha*) to Jagannātha as whose earthly deputies (rāuta) they claimed to rule. It was this "Puri model" which in turn deeply influenced the socio-political development in Puri's hinterland. After the central kingdom had succumbed to the Afghan Sultanate of Bengal in mid-sixteenth century, the mostly tribal rulers of the hinterland adopted this model in a process of "Kṣatriyaization" during their emergence as autonomous local rājās.

Another major theme of several articles is historiography and its relationship with legitimation of royal authority and, thus, with the process of state formation, too. During the heydays of Persian historiography at Muslim courts several regions of India witnessed the emergence of a new genre of regional historiography. Centring around a regional deity and its *kṣetra*, it combined mythical accounts of localized divine manifestations and of founder-kings of the "hoary past" with legendary accounts of former imperial royal donors and short annal-like descriptions of more recent historical local kings. These rulers of local successor states appear to have derived their legitimation primarily through patronage of the religious centres of their erstwhile imperial predecessors and through eulogies in these temple chronicles. The Mādaḷā Pāñji provides again an excellent example of this type of late medieval historiography. Originating in the period of restoration of places of Hindu worship under Akbar, these chronicles praise Rāmacandra, the local ruler of nearby Khurda, for his restoration of the Jagannātha cult as the "Second Indradyumna", the first being Puri's mythical founder king. A study of the different versions of the temple chronicles of Puri and their various sources shows to what extent these late medieval temple chronicles served as a medium of royal legitimation.

Two papers take up these themes in the context of South Indian history. The *Cidambaramāhātmya*, an early and otherwise conventional hagiographic description of Chidambaram, contains clear allusions to Kulottuṅga I who had usurped the Cōḷa throne and who obviously

needed some additional legitimation of his rule over South India. The foundation of the Vijayanagara empire offers yet another fascinating story of the role that hagiographic accounts and historiography played in the establishment of a medieval kingdom. Moreover the analysis of the contemporary sources of early Vijayanagara discloses a process of systematic "rewriting history" resulting in the invention of the story of Adiśaṅkara's famous *digvijaya* and of his relationship with Sringeri, thus laying the foundation of the future institution of Śaṅkarācāryas.

The papers on Southeast Asia deal with the same range of themes. They show that Southeast Asian indigenous rulers obviously had faced very similar problems of state formation which they tried to solve – under strong Indian influence – by similar means of legitimation as did their contemporary Indian "colleagues". Viewing the process of state formation on both sides of the Bay of Bengal as a process of convergence[1] rather than as "cultural transplantation" or even political colonization of Southeast Asia, comparative studies of South and Southeast Asia may help to understand more clearly processes in both regions which are seemingly not corelated. The paper on Max Weber's contribution to the study of Hinduization in India and Indianization in Southeast Asia indicates the strong influence of Weber's Indian studies on Van Leur's conceptualization of Indonesia's early history and its relations with India. The study of the Devarāja cult of Angkor, which had become a synonym for the cult of deified "god-kings" in Southeast Asia as well as in India, was undertaken as a parallel study to the research on Orissa. A critical analysis of the epigraphical evidence of Angkor and references to certain cults in eastern India reveal in Southeast Asia in fact an even greater nearness between *kṣatra* and *kṣetra* than in India. But at the same time the study strongly disproves the widely accepted notion that "it was the king who was the great god of ancient Cambodia" (G. Coedès). Instead it was Śiva who was worshipped as Devarāja, thus refuting indirectly also the equally wrong assumption that Orissa's Gajapati kings once too had achieved a divine status. The paper on the epigraphical references to the "city" and the "state" in early Indonesia shows among other things that the spread of Indian religions and Hinduism in particular to Southeast Asia's early courts was mainly due to the quest of early indigenous rulers for legitimation of their still uncertain royal authority. In the paper on the

[1] H. Kulke, 'Indian Colonies, Indianization or Cultural Convergence ? Reflections on the Changing Image of India's Role in South-East Asia', in : *Onderzoek in Zuidoost-Azie*, ed. by H. Schulte Nordholt, Leiden 1990, pp. 8 – 32 (= *Semaian* 3).

early and imperial kingdoms in Southeast Asian history it is attempted to develop a conceptual framework of an evolutionary model of early state formation in Southeast Asia. As has been shown more recently also in the Indian context[2] early medieval state formation ran through three different but interrelated stages from chiefdoms to early and to imperial kingdoms, extending step-wise royal authority in a concentric mode into the hinterland. It is this context in which the above mentioned different stages of royal legitimation can be traced.

This book owes a great deal to various friends and colleagues in India and Germany whose comments and encouragement were invaluable during the many years when these papers were written. Two of them, Anncharlott Eschmann and Günther Sontheimer, are no more with us. Words alone will not suffice to express my thanks for their friendship and advice.

I am also indebted to Mrs. H. Stampa-Rabe, Mr. H. Frese and Mr. M. Brandtner for their unfailing energy and help while preparing the final camera ready copy of this book.

The book is dedicated to Uschi, Annette, Roland and Tilmann who were with me in Delhi when the manuscript was handed over to Mr. Ramesh Jain of Manohar to whom I express, last but not least, my thanks for the many years of fruitful cooperation.

New Delhi Hermann Kulke
26.1.1993

---

2 H. Kulke, 'The Early and the Imperial Kingdom: A Processural Model of State Formation in Early Medieval India', in : *The State in India : 1000 – 1600*, ed. by H. Kulke, New Delhi: OUP (*Themes in Indian History*).

Acknowledgements

The author and the publisher would like to thank the editors and publishers of the following journals and books for their permission to reprint the articles in the present volume:

"Royal Temple Policy and the Structure of Medieval Hindu Kingdoms", from: *The Cult of Jagannath and the Regional Tradition of Orissa*, ed. By A. Eschmann, H. Kulke and G. C. Tripathi, New Delhi: Manohar Publications, 1978, pp. 125-128 (South Asian Studies, No. 8)

"King Anaṅgabhīma III, the Veritable Founder of the Gajapati Kingship and of the Jagannāth Trinity at Puri", from: *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland,* 1981, No 1, pp. 26-39, published by the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, London.

"Jagannātha under Muslim Rule" from: *Unmana: Souvenir of Akhil Bharat Jagannatha Consciouness Conference,* Cuttack, Dec. 28-31, 1984, published by Sadasiva Ratha Sarma, Cuttack, 1984, p. 17-32

"Kṣetra and Kṣatra. The Cult of Jagannātha of Puri and the 'Royal Letters' (*chāmu ciṭāus*) of the Rājās of Puri", from: *The Sacred Centre as the Focus of Political Interest.* Proceedings of the Symposium held on the occasion of the 375th anniversary of the University of Groningen, 5-8 March 1989, ed. by Hans Bakker, Groningen, 1992, pp. 131-142 (Groningen Oriental Studies, Vol. VI)

"Rathas and Rājās" The Car Festival at Puri", from: *Mobile Architecture in Asia: Ceremonial Chariots, Floats and Carriages,* ed. by D. Jones and G. Michell, London 1979, pp. (*aarp* 16).

"Kṣatriyaization and Social Change: A Study in the Orissa Setting", from: Aspects of Changing India: *Studies in Honour of Prof. G. S Ghurye,* ed. by S. Devadas Pillai, Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1976, pp. 398-409.

"Legitimation and Townplanning in the Feudatory States of Central Orissa" from: *Ritual Space in India: Studies in Architectural*

Anthropology, ed. by J. Pieper, London, 1980, pp. 30-40 (*aarp* 17)

"Tribal Deities at Princely Courts. The Feudatory Rājās of Central Orissa and their Tutelary Deities (*iṣṭadevatās*)", from: *Folk Ways in Religion: Gods, Spirits and Men*, ed. by Sitakant Mahapatra, Cuttack: Institute of Oriental and Orissan Studies, 1984, pp. 13-24 (*Folk Culture*, Vol.II)

"The Chronicles and the Temple Records of the Mādaḷā Pāñji of Puri: A Reassessment of the Evidence", from: *Indian Archives*, published by the National Archives of India, New Delhi, Vol. 36 (1987) pp. 1-24.

"Reflections on the Sources of the Temple Chronicles of the Mādaḷā Pāñji of Puri", from: *Hinduismus und Buddhismus*, ed. by Harry Falk, Freiburg: Hedwig Falk, 1987, pp. 173-207.

"Functional Interpretation of a South Indian Māhātmya: The Legend of Hiraṇyavarman and the Life of the Cōḷa King Kulottuṅga I", from: *Saeculum*, 20 (1969) pp. 412-422.

"Mahārājas, Mahants and Historians: Reflections on the Historiography of Early Vijayanagara and Sringeri", from: *Vijaynagar—City and Empire*, ed. by A.L. Dallapiccola and S. Zingel-Ave Lallemant, Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1985, pp. 120-143 (Beiträge zur Südasienforschung, Südasien-Institut, Universität Heidelberg, Vol. 100)

"Max Weber's Contribution to the Study of 'Hinduization' in India and 'Indianization' in Southeast Asia", from: *Recent Research on Max Weber"s Studies on Hinduism*, ed. by D. Kantowsky, Munich: Weltforum-Verlag, 1986, pp. 97-116.

"The Early and the Imperial Kingdom in Southeast Asian History", from: *Southeast Asia in the 9th to 14th Centuries*, ed. by D. Marr and A. Milner, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1986, pp. 1-22.

"Epigraphical References to the 'City' and the 'State' in Early Indonesia", from: *Indonesia*, 52 (1991) pp. 3-22, published by Cornell University, Ithaca. N.Y.

"The Devarāja Cult: Legitimation and Apotheosis of the Ruler in the Kingdom of Angkor", from: Data Paper, Southeast Asian Program, Cornell University, No 108, Ithaca, NY. 1978.

Abbreviations

BEFEO	*Bulletin de l' Ecole Française d' Extrême-Orient*
CJ	*The Cult of Jagannath and the Regional Tradition of Orissa*; ed. by A. Eschmann, H. Kulke and G. C. Tripathi, New Delhi, 1979)
EI	*Epigraphia Indica*
IC	*Inscriptions du Cambodge*, ed. by G. Coedès
IESHR	*Indian Economic and Social History Review*
IO	*Inscriptions of Orissa*, ed. by S. N. Rajaguru
JAHRS	*Journal of the Andhra Historical Research Society*
JASB	*Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*
JBORS	*Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society*
JESHO	*Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*
JIH	*Journal of Indian History*
JKHRS	*Journal of the Kalinga Historical Research Society*
JRAS	*Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*
MP	Mādaḷā Pāñji
OHRJ	*Orissa Historical Research Journal*
SII	*South Indian Inscriptions*

ROYAL TEMPLE POLICY AND THE STRUCTURE OF MEDIEVAL HINDU KINGDOMS

Orissa began its history as a province and later even as the centre of two great kingdoms under two of the most important rulers of early India, i.e. under Aśoka (3rd century B.C.) and Khāravela (1st century B.C.). These kingdoms, on the one hand, were more centralized than the later kingdoms in Orissa and on the other, they were - except for their centres - less rooted in and less linked with the local power structure. In Orissa, both the empires therefore left only few archaeological traces outside the central area around Bhubaneswar. But both kingdoms seem to have initiated in Orissa a political development on the local and sub-regional level. This development gained new and even stronger impulses by the "classical" north Indian Empire of the Guptas in the 4th and 5th centuries A.D. and by the early 7th century power struggle between the three great kings of north, east, and central India, i.e. Harṣa, Śaśāṅka and Pulakeśin respectively who, one after the other, had temporarily conquered parts of Orissa.

Although influenced from outside, the development in Orissa during the early centuries A.D. is characterized by a territorial segmentation and a political development "from below". To students of the history of Orissa, this feature is well known through a number of various small kingdoms and principalities scattered along the coast of the Bay of Bengal and in the hilly hinterland. Though the borders of these kingdoms and principalities often varied according to the power of the ruling dynasties, and even some names, in the course of the history, have been changed,[1] the topography of their centres and their spatial distribution remained almost unchanged from the 6th to the 11th and 12th centuries. In the 11th century, the Somavaṃśa dynasty united for a few generations their homelands in Dakṣina Kośala in western Orissa with

[1] D.C. Sircar, *Studies in the Geography of Ancient and Medieval India*, Delhi 1960, p. 136 ff.

central Orissa. This first medieval regional kingdom of Orissa was followed in the early 12th century by the Gaṅgas who finally unified their southern homeland Kaliṅga with central and northern Orissa. The Gaṅgas superimposed their imperial power on the various small kingdoms and local principalities which had peopled the political map of Orissa.

In his article on the "Integration of the Agrarian System of South India", Burton Stein delineated his conception of the "nuclear areas of corporate institution" as a major factor of integration in early South Indian history. These nuclear areas were characterized by four elements. They were (i) fundamentally independent and self-governing, (ii) autonomous economic units and (iii) in social and (iv) cultural terms centres of Hindu civilization.[2] The spatial distribution of these nuclear areas of well-organized and integrated areas of settled agricultural villages coincided in south eastern India with the lower course of three major rivers at the Coromandel coast, and their gradual extension caused a "sustained displacement of tribally organized, pastoral and hunting society of forests and upland areas by caste-organized village-based societies".[3]

In the context of Orissa, Stein's conception will be brought to bear mainly upon the *political* development of early state formation. In Orissa, during their early phase these territorial units are therefore conceived as *nuclear areas of sub-regional power.* It will be shown that, in a later phase, some of these nuclear areas of *sub-regional* power became the homeland *(janaka-bhū)* of the royal dynasties of the future *regional* kingdoms. Stein's concept of nuclear areas will therefore be conceived in a less static way and, due to the persistent existence of a strong tribal element in the development of Orissa, in a less dichotomic way. In Orissa, nuclear areas were an integral part of a continuous process of political development and centres of integration of tribal elements rather than of their "sustained displacement."

Most important among these nuclear areas of sub-regional power in Orissa were those territories either situated in the upper delta

---

[2] B. Stein, Integration of the Agrarian System of South India, in: *Land Control and Social Structure in Indian History,* ed. by R.E. Frykenberg, Madison 1969, p. 185 ff.

[3] ibid., p. 179.

regions of the various rivers flowing into the Bay of Bengal or upstream in the valleys, especially the Mahanadi river. During the second half of the first millennium A.D. these were Kaliṅga, Koṅgoda, Daksiṇa Tośalī and Uttara Tośalī (respectively Utkal/Oḍra) at the Bay of Bengal and Daksiṇa Kośala in the upper Mahanadi valley. Separate territorial units of temporary importance were Khiñjalī Maṇḍala in central Mahānadī valley between Utkal and Dakṣina Kośala and Kodālaka Maṇḍala, the area between Dhenkanal and Talcher at the Brāhmaṇī river. These nuclear areas were usually separated from each other by mountains (e.g., Kaliṅga from Koṅgoda by the Mahendragiri) or by jungles (e.g., Utkal from Khiñjali Maṇḍala and Kodālaka Maṇḍala) still inhabited by various "unpacified" tribes.

Contrary to the development in South India, as pointed out by B. Stein, the riverine nuclear areas in Orissa appear to have never enjoyed a *de facto* self-government through corporate institutions like the great district assemblies (*periyanaḍu*) in Tamil Nadu. In Orissa they were usually under the rule of Hindu chiefs or rājās, who were either independent or only temporarily and nominally subjugated by "foreign" rulers. These little rājās claimed to organize their rule according to Hindu law books (*śāstras*),[4] a claim, however, which was realized initially only at the centres of these early Hindu rājās and their courts. These centres of the nuclear areas were encircled by a number of tax-free *agrahāra* or *śāsana* villages which had been donated by the rājās to Brahmins who formed the elite of the administrative and ritual functionaries. These Brahmins of the court circle, together with those Brahmins who had been settled in the outer areas, certainly had a deep influence upon the "inner colonization" of the nuclear areas and the enforcement of (Hindu) law and (royal) order. Furthermore, it was mainly due to their influence that these nuclear areas were gradually integrated into the all-Indian sphere of Sanskrit learning and hitherto unknown temple architecture, both indispensable paraphernalia of future Hindu kingship. The most significant economic feature of these fertile riverine nuclear areas was a

---

[4] Somadatta, who ruled in northern Orissa (Utkal and Dandabhukti) during the first quarter of the 7th century under the suzerainty of Śāsāṅka of Bengal, mentioned in his Midnapore inscription that he followed the Manuśāstra (*IO*, Vol. 1, 2, No. 30).

peasant agriculture, based on irrigated rice cultivation. During this early period inter-regional trade seems -even in the case of the seafaring Kaliṅgas - to have been of minor importance in the process of early state formation.

This process of political development of certain nuclear areas began in the fifth century when donations of whole villages to Brahmins became more and more frequent. It was certainly fully developed in the late sixth century; the inscriptions bear evidence of a steadily increasing number of these principalities and small sub-regional kingdoms.[5] Other unmistakable indicators for the blossoming of this process in eastern India were land donations not only to individual Brahmins but also to temples and affiliated monastic institutions[6] and the first construction of Hindu stone temples.[7]

The consolidation of the small kingdoms and principalities in the nuclear areas was a long and gradual process.[8] One of the main problems during this period was the relationship of the Hindu rājās - often themselves descendants of tribal chiefs - with the tribes which surrounded the insulated nuclear areas. On the one hand, the society of the early courts depended on their support for the security of the internal communication and borders. On the other, their land was needed for the gradual extension of the peasant agriculture, which alone was able to yield sufficient surplus crop for the maintenance of the court society, e.g. the members of the ruling family, Brahmins, officials and soldiers.

Although the relationship between the Hindu society and the tribals was never without tensions, its generally peaceful character -

---

[5] Under the two branches of the Māṭharas in south Kaliṅga this process seems to have commenced already in the 4th century. In central Kaliṅga (of the Ganjam District) there existed already 36 Brahmin villages during the 5th century (*IO*, Vol. 1, 2, p. 25 ff).

[6] Kanas inscription, in: *E I*, XXVIII, p. 328.

[7] K.C. Panigrahi, *Archaeological Remains of Bhubaneswar*, Calcutta 1961, p. 28, dates the oldest temples in Bhubaneswar around 575 A.D. (Śatrughneśvara group).

[8] For a more detailed analysis of this process see also my forthcoming paper "The Early and the Imperial Kingdom: A Processural Model of State Formation in Early Medieval India", to be published in *The State in India 1000-1700*, ed. by H. Kulke, New Delhi, Oxford University Press (*Themes in Indian History*).

especially if we compare it with the annexation of northern America by European settlers - was certainly one of the great achievements of Indian history. Generally speaking, in Orissa it was, at least till the nineteenth century, a continuous process of partial integration and Hindu indoctrination rather than a process of "sustained displacement". During this gradual development Brahmins played an important role. They defined and codified the duties of the tribes, which as the Mahābhārata nicely puts it, "reside in the dominion of the [Aryan] kings". According to the Mahābhārata they should lead a "recluse living in the forest ... and serve their king ... dig wells, give water to thirsty travellers, give away beds and make other reasonable presents upon Brahmanas".[9] It was the task of those Brahmins to whom villages in remote areas had been donated to propagate this ideal for their own and their kings' sake.[10]

Whereas usually this indoctrination sustained an unstable pacification of the tribes in the outer areas, it caused their partial integration in those more central areas which were already penetrated by pockets of Hindu peasants. This partial integration was achieved through their gradual inclusion into the lower strata of the caste system, paradoxically usually as "outcastes" and/or through their inclusion into the militia of the Hindu court. This process elsewhere has been called Kshatriyaization: "In its functional sense Kshatriyaization could be called social change 'from above' which was initiated in tribal areas by the Kshatriyas, i.e. zamindārs, chiefs or rājās to strengthen their claims to legitimacy in the society and to broaden the base of their economic and political power."[11]

Both ways of partial integration (inclusion in the caste system and into the militia) deeply influenced Hinduism and the means of

---

[9] *Mbh., Śāntiparvan,* LXV (translated by Roy, VIII, p. 146)

[10] "The significance of landgrants to Brāhmaṇas is not difficult to appreciate. The grantees brought new knowledge which improved cultivation and inculcated in the aborigines a sense of loyalty to the established order upheld by the rulers". R.S. Sharma, *Indian Feudalism*, Calcutta 1965, p. 281.

[11] See also chapter 6 on Kshatriyaization and chapter 13 on Max Weber's concept of Hinduization.

legitimation of Hindu royal power in these only partly Hinduized areas. The inclusion of tribal groups into the Hindu caste system initiated, on the village level, a process of Hinduization of their deities. The assignment of military duties to tribal or semi-tribal groups, often led to royal patronage of the dominant autochthonous deities of the respective area.

The main reason for this royal patronage was that even a fairly Hinduized court, in tribal or partly Hinduized surroundings, was highly dependent on the support and loyality of the tribes. Royal patronage of autochthonous deities seems to have been an essential presupposition for the consolidation of political power and its legitimation in the Hindu-tribal zone of Orissa. Whether the Hinduized chiefs or Hindu rājās had ascended from the local tribes or whether they had entered the respective areas as roaming freebooters, most of them accepted the dominant autochthonous deities of their territories as family and tutelary deities of their principalities.

Three examples from Orissa may suffice for this early type of royal patronage of autochthonous deities.[12] Two inscriptions[13] of the 5th and 6th centuries A.D. mention royal land donations to the mother (*ambikā*) Maṇināgeśvarī, whose temple still exists on a steep hill near the capital of the former feudatory state of Ranpur. Even today she is worshipped as one of the most powerful goddesses of central Orissa to whom till recently human sacrifices were made. Due to her Sanskrit name ("Lady of the jewel serpent") she is considered as a Hindu serpent goddess whose bronze image in the shape of Durgā is worshipped as the tutelary deity of the former feudatory Rājās of Ranpur. One who takes the pain to climb up the hill, however, recognizes an unhewn round stone (*chatā pathara*)[14] of the original cult image of Maṇināgeśvarī. Only later, Hindu cult images of Cāmuṇḍā were added. It is, therefore, highly probable that the land donations of the 5th and 6th centuries were

[12] See also A. Eschmann, Hinduization of Tribal Deities in Orissa: The Śākta and the Śaiva Typology, in: *CJ*, pp. 79-98.

[13] Kanas inscription, in: *E I*, XXVIII, p. 328 and the Olasingh plate of Bhānuvardhana, in: *IO*, Vol., 1, 2, p. 133 ff.

[14] *Raṇapuradurga-Rājavaṃśānukramaṇī*, by L. Sadangi, p. 24.

dedicated to the powerful autochthonous goddess who resided on a hill in the border area between the Hinduized delta of the Mahanadi river and its tribal hinterland.

When the Gaṅgas rose to power in the area south of the Mahendragiri mountain around 500 A.D., they acknowledged a deity of the Saora tribe on the Mahendragiri under the name Śiva-Gokarṇasvāmin as the tutelar deity of the family *(kula-devatā)*. This tradition has been preserved for centuries. In an inscription of the early 12th century it is mentioned that the legendary founder of the dynasty, Kāmarṇava, after his arrival in Kaliṅga climbed up the Mahendragiri and worshipped Gokarṇasvāmin. "Out of grace (*prasādāt*) the god bestowed on Kāmarṇava all symbols of kingship (*sāmrājya-cihna*) who descended (*avatīrya*)[15] from the mountain, killed the chief of the Śabara tribe (*Śabarāditya*) and conquered Kaliṅga".[16]

Another outstanding example is the goddess Stambheśvarī ("Lady of the pillar"), a Hinduized tribal deity who till today is worshipped in various parts of Orissa. Her first known royal patron (*stambheśvarī-pāda-bhakta*) was a Rāja Tuṣṭikara who ruled around 500 A.D. in a predominantly tribal area south of Sonpur.[17] Between the 6th and 8th century Stambheśvarī was the tutelary deity of the Śūlkī dynasty which ruled in the above-mentioned riverine territory of the Dhenkanal-Talcher area. All rājās of this dynasty combined their names with that of their tutelary deity (e.g. Raṇa-stambha, Kula-stambha), and in many of their inscriptions they claimed to have received their kingship in their capital Kodālaka through the grace of the goddess Stambheśvarī. It is most important for our problem that the *Sūlkīs* were most probably members of the *Śaulika* tribe which, according to the Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa, lived between the Kaliṅgas and the Cedis (of Dakṣina Kośala). It is, therefore, quite likely that the rājās of the Śūlkī dynasty had acknowledged and royally patronized the dominant autochthonous deity of their

---

15 *avatīrya* certainly is an allusion to the divine *avatāra* incarnation.

16 Vizagapatnam plates of Anantavarman Coḍagaṅga of the year 1119 A.D. (see S.N. Rajaguru, *History of the Gaṅgas*, 1968/73, Vol. II, p. 14 f).

17 The Kalahandi copper-plate of Tuṣṭikara was first published by S.N. Rajguru in: *JKHRS*, II, 2/3 (1974) and reedited by D.C. Sircar, in: *E I*, XXX, p. 274 ff.

own region as their tutelary deity. In the ninth century, the Bhañja dynasty of the Khiñjali Maṇḍala in the Baudh-Sonpur region - another area where the Stambheśvarī cult is still prevalent[18] - worshipped the goddess Stambheśvarī.

Most of these autochtonous tutelary deities of Orissa underwent a process of Hinduization, the intensity and direction of which usually was directly influenced by the parallel rise of the sub-regional political authority from tribal chieftainship to Hindu kingship.[19] Generally speaking, the process of Hinduization of these tutelary deities was similar to the Śākta and Śaiva typology of Hinduization as described by A. Eschmann. But whenever a chief or rājā included a powerful autochthonous deity into the cult of his court, its development assumed peculiar features. In the course of time the cult of the tutelary deity at their place of origin was raised to the level of a fully developed temple cult whose ritual was nearly completely Hinduized. But two important aspects of the cult remained nearly unchanged: the original uniconical symbol of the deity and its priests. These two most visible aspects of the cult seem to have served as the ritual bridge between the Hindu rājās and the people who still regarded the tutelary deity as their own one. Priests and the original images remained even unchanged when the royal court itself became more and more Hinduized. During this process usually a Hindu substitute or "movable image" (*calantī pratimā*) of the autochthonous deity was consecrated at the palace where its Hindu cult was exclusively performed by the court Brahmins. In some cases even a Hindu substitute, mostly in the form of Durgā or Cāmuṇḍā, was also placed in front of or behind the original cult symbol of the tutelary deity. But only on certain occasions, usually during the Durgā pūjā, when the rājā worshipped the deity and buffaloes were sacrificed in her name, the Brahmin rājaguru might have taken over temporarily the royal pūjā.

The worship of Hinduized tribal deities by the early dynasties of Orissa should not be understood as an indicator of a still existing tribal culture at the respective courts. The excellent Hindu temples

---

[18] A. Eschmann, op.cit.

[19] For further details see chapter 8 on Tribal Deities at Princely Courts.

at their capitals - e.g. Kaliṅganagara of the Gaṅgas and Kodālaka (present Kualo) of the Śulkīs - are an eloquent testimony of their high Hindu culture. A major reason why these dynasties over centuries had patronized Hinduized tribal deities as their tutelary deities was the fact that the royal "nuclear areas" were surrounded by tribes on whose loyality and military support they depended. Another reason was certainly the unbroken belief in the *śaktī* of the deities.

The politically and economically highly developed nuclear areas yielded sufficient surplus crop for the establishment and the maintenance of a sub-regional power and its gradual extension into the tribal border areas. Looting expeditions against neighbouring peoples often led to a temporary conquest of the adjoining nuclear areas. But the rise of a *subregional* principality to a *regional* kingdom, comprising several nuclear areas and its lasting establishment, presupposed a permanent participation in the agrarian surplus of the conquered nuclear areas.

The problem of the rise of regional kingdoms, therefore, was not merely a question of military conquest. The crucial point was always to what extent the victorious conqueror succeeded in unifying the newly conquered areas permanently with his own homeland. Usually the conqueror tried to exchange the members of the defeated ruling families for his own relatives and deserving soldiers. But often enough he had to acknowledge the defeated rājās as his subordinate feudatory rājās (*sāmanta-rājās*). Their loyalty usually depended on the military power of their new suzerain, whose paramount military power was strengthened by the tribute and booty from the conquered areas. It was the crucial question of the early kingdoms of India's Middle Ages that their power to extract tribute from their feudatories was again subject to their own military power. A regional kingdom based on an amalgamation of the already fairly well developed nuclear areas, characterized by their own cultural identities and socio-political loyalties, may therefore best be described as a "multicentered system of power".[20] Besides investing more and more into their increasing armies the Hindu rājās of these regional kingdoms, in the absence of a centralized bureaucracy, tried with their tradi-

---

[20] B. Stein, op.cit., p. 185.

tional patrimonial power to counterbalance these dangerous local forces by *ritual* means. This aim was achieved mainly through three measures:

1. royal patronage of important places of pilgrimage within their respective kingdoms,
2. a systematic and large-scale settlement of Brahmins and
3. the construction of new "imperial temples" within the core region of the kingdoms.

The history of the Hindu places of pilgrimage (*tīrtha*) is inextricably linked with the *bhakti* faith. Although in its origins much older, the ideal of salvation through intense devotion (*bhakti*) to a personal deity became a powerful religious movement in South India from the late sixth century onwards. This impressive folk devotionalism manifested itself in innumerable famous Tamil hymns which "were the works of those from all social strata from Brahmin to untouchable."[21] It was mainly through this *bhakti* movement that forms of orthodox Brahmin Hinduism in a continuous process of two-way communication came down to the villages and rural centres and, *vice versa*, various autochthonous deities in a long and gradual process of Hinduization were included into the pantheon of *bhakti* Hinduism. This process of integration (or "universalization") of autochthonous cults into the sphere of all-Indian Hinduism invariably brought the indigenous cults of the various regions into prominence.

It was due to this powerful folk religion that the *tīrthas*, which were celebrated in South India in the hymns of the Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava saints (*nāyaṇārs* and *āḷvars*) became the main centres of popular religious activities. Initially the cults of these *tīrthas* were despised by high-caste Brahmins,[22] especially by the Vedic Brahmins who formed the core of the priests of the royal courts. But the powerful *bhakti* movement which meanwhile had become

---

[21] B. Stein, Brahman and Peasant in Early South Indian History; in: *Adyar Library Bulletin*, 31 (1967/68) p. 256.

[22] "They that are employed in courts of justice for summoning people, they *that perform worship for others for a fee*, they that perform the sacrifices of Vaiśyas and Śūdras, they that officiate in sacrifices on behalf of a whole village and they that make voyages on the ocean, - these five are regarded as Cāṇḍalas among Brāhmaṇas". *Mbh*, *ŚP*, LXXVI (Transl. by Roy, Vol. VIII, p. 173).

the true religion of the peasant society within the highly developed nuclear areas, could no longer be bypassed by the royal ideologists. The *bhakti* religion with its emphasis on personal faith and self-sacrifice became "the best religion ... to hold this type of society and its state together".[23]

One of the characteristic features of the cults at these centres of pilgrimage was an increasing process of a ritual "royalization" of these deities. It is difficult to decide whether they had assumed more and more royal features due to royal patronage, or because the priests had ascribed these features of divine kingship to their gods in order to glorify them. But it is beyond doubt that the daily performance of the rituals and the great annual festivals of the "royal deities" - with all their royal paraphernalia and exuberant wealth - became the best and most visible legitimation of royal power and wealth of the "divine kings" on the earth. It is apparent that the royal patronage of these places of pilgrimage through generous land donations and constructions of new and impressive temple buildings in these *tīrthas* had a great significance for the legitimation of royal power. Through their landed property which in some cases was scattered over several parts of the kingdom and the pilgrims who returned to their homes in all parts of the kingdom, the *tīrthas* became centres of a multi-centered royal network which united the different nuclear areas religiously and even economically.

The second counterbalancing measure against centrifugal forces of regional kingdoms was a systematic settlement of Brahmins. As mentioned above, royal land donations to Brahmins have been known since the early centuries A.D. But these early donations were usually granted to families of royal priests at the central courts (rājagurus, etc.) and to individuals and small groups of Brahmins. In some cases they were settled in quite remote places where they fulfilled the above-mentioned great task of "inner colonization" of the peripheral zones of the early nuclear areas. Towards the end of the first millenium A.D., a new dimension was added to the royal policy of land donation. Large groups of sometimes several hundred Brahmins were systematically settled near the political centres of the kingdom.

---

[23] Kosambi, *Myth and Reality*, Bombay 1962, p. 32.

Three examples from western India, Kaliṅga and northern India may illustrate this new development. In 930 A.D. the Rāṣṭrakūṭa king Govinda IV donated vast portions of his country to Brahmins and temples: "Be it known to you that I ... who am maintaining grants to temples and *agrahāras* ... and who day by day am issuing charters of villages ... gave unto the Brahmans six hundred *agrahāras* together with three lakhs [300,000] of *suvarṇa* [coins] ... and granted to the temples for the enjoyment of the gods eight hundred villages, four lakhs of *suvarṇas*."[24] In Kaliṅga, king Vajrahasta (1038-1070) who laid the foundation of the later imperial Gaṅgas, donated the village Korni to 300 Brahmins, which was situated near the capital Kaliṅganagara. In 1078 A.D. Coḍagaṅga renewed this donation, and in 1112/13 A.D. just after having conquered central Orissa he enlarged this *agrahāra* of the 300 Brahmins with portions from several other villages.[25] No doubt, these 300 Brahmins belonged to the administrative and ritual elite of the new court at Kaliṅganagara since Vajrahasta. But it is unlikely that these 300 Brahmins were maintained only by the surplus crop of a single village.[26] Many of them, therefore, might have drawn additional income as priests of one of the great temples of Kaliṅganagara. In 1093 A.D. Rājā Candradeva of the Gāhaḍavāla dynasty of Kanauj donated a complete fiscal district (*paṭṭalā*) to 500 individual Brahmins near Benares whose names were all mentioned in the inscription. Few years later he enlarged this generous donation through further 37 villages from two other districts in the neighbourhood of Benares.[27]

It is obvious that the settlement of such large groups of Brahmins especially in the centre of the regional kingdoms cannot be

---

[24] Cambay plates of Govinda IV, in: *EI*, VII, p. 45.

[25] Korni plates, 2nd set; G.V. Sitapathi, in: *JAHRS*, 1 (1927) 109-120.

[26] This is obvious when we consider that Vajrahasta donated to one of his relatives 35 villages out of which he formed a new district (*viṣaya*) (Narasapatam plates, in: *EI*, XL, p. 147 ff).

[27] Chandravati plates of Candradeva, in: *EI*, XIV, p. 192-209. Exempted from the first donation of the whole district were those villages which had already been donated to different donees: 25 villages to temples, 2 villages to Brahmins and 6 villages to state officers (see also R.S. Sharma, *Indian Feudalism*, 1961, p. 85).

explained in purely religious terms. The Rāṣṭrakūṭa king Govinda IV who gave away 1400 villages and 7,00,000 *suvarṇas* to Brahmins and temples or, at least, reconfirmed earlier donations, was in fact one of the weakest rulers of this powerful dynasty.[28] Apparently he tried to stabilize his weak power through appeasement of the hierocratical power of his vast empire. Vajrahasta of Kaliṅganagara had reunited the diverse units of the Gaṅga kingdom. After he had thus founded the "Greater Gaṅgas" of Kaliṅganagara, he obviously strengthened the central power of his new kingdom by obliging 300 court Brahmins at the center through the donation of the village Korni near his capital. Candradeva of the Gāhaḍavāla dynasty of Kanauj donated a whole district near Benares to 500 Brahmins after he had just conquered the Ganges valley between Allahabad and Benares. His generous land donation, which he enlarged only a few years later by 37 more villages, certainly did not aim at a strengthening of the Brahmanical element in the Benares region. It was at that time - before its conquest by the Muslims at the end of the 12th century - still the unrivalled stronghold of Hinduism in India. Candradeva's land donations, therefore, most likely had the function to strengthen his own hold over this important newly conquered region of his kingdom.

The main function of these generous land donations to large groups of Brahmins was to provide the central power of the great regional kingdoms with a group of administrative and ideological specialists. Their way of life and their traditional ideology of contentedness and worldly abstinence ("They possess nothing, still they have no craving for wealth and kingdom")[29] made them an ideal group of "extra-patrimonial" administrators counterbalancing local vested interests.

The third counter-measure against these local forces of the regional kingdoms was the construction of new monumental temples of a hitherto unknown height. They exceeded the previous temples of the respective regions sometimes two or three times and reached a height which was never achieved again. It is astonishing that so far it seems to have escaped the attention of scholars that

---

28 A.S. Altekar, *Rāshṭrakūṭas and their Times*. 2nd ed. 1967, p. 106.

29 *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, V, 5.

the period during which these new gigantic temples sprang up corresponds exactly with the rise of the great regional kingdoms of India's Middle Ages.[30] It is most likely that through the construction of these temples the rājās tried to create a new and *centralized ritual structure*, focused on the new state temple and its royal cult. As the cult of the imperial temple (*"Reichstempel"*) was directly linked with the rājā - in fact it was an extremely enlarged cult of the personal *iṣṭadevatā* of the small palace shrines - this new centralized ritual structure finally was focused on the rājā himself.

The best examples of this new royal temple policy are the famous Bṛhadīśvara temple at Tanjore and the Jagannātha temple at Puri.[31] After a long period of political weakness, Rājarāja the Great (985-1014) reestablished the hegemony of his Coḷa dynasty over the various dynasties of South India during the last years of the 10th century and conquered even northern Sri Lanka. During the following struggle for hegemony over the whole southern peninsula against the powerful Western Cāḷukyas (who had succeeded the Rāṣṭrakūṭas in 973) he constructed in c. 1003 A.D. the largest temple of India in his capital Tanjore. Like other monuments of "political architecture" in India, the temple symbolized the new royal power of its founder. The extensive donative inscriptions at the walls of the temple at Tanjore reveal an even more explicit political function of this temple. Hundreds of Brahmins and temple servants were brought to Tanjore, among them 400 dancing girls, about 200 dancing masters, musicians, drummers, tailors, goldsmiths, accountants, etc. Some of these servants had to be maintained by regular duties in form of rice sent from their own villages. For other servants and the maintenance of the Brahmins, villages were donated to the temple all over the empire,

---

[30] E.g. Kaṇḍarīya-Mahādeva temple in Khajuraho (1002 A.D.), Bṛhadīśvara temple in Tanjore (1012), Udayeśvara temple in Udayapur (1059-1080), Liṅgarāja temple in Bhubaneswar (ca. 1060), Jagannātha temple in Puri (ca. 1135). This development culminated in the construction of the Konarak temple in about 1250 A.D. More recently this aspect temple studies has been taken by other scholars, too. See e.g. J. Heitzman, Ritual Policy and Economy. The Transactional Network of an Imperial Temple in Medieval South India, in: *JESHO*, 34 (1991) 23-54.

[31] For Puri's Jagannātha temple see particularly chapter 2 on Anaṅgabhīma.

even in Sri Lanka.[32] Rājarāja and several members of his family furthermore donated immense treasures of gold and jewels to the temple which at once made the temple one of the richest in India. Cash income from the temple villages from all over the country and money donated to the temple were lent at the interest of 12 1/2 per cent to be paid into the temple treasure. The money was given to villages which lay in the nuclear area of the Cōḷas around Tanjore which was thus economically further developed through a new centralized form of ritual imposition of a tax.

The full implication of this new centralized ritual structure is getting even clearer from the cult of the temple itself. In its centre is a Śivaliṅga which bears the royal name Rājarājeśvara. Although it certainly meant "Śiva (the Lord) of (the king) Rājarāja", it also implied some kind of identification of the Coḷa king with Śiva ("Rājarāja, the Lord Śiva"). The donations, the annual tributes, and the visits which Rājarāja's feudatories might have had to pay to the temple on certain occasions, were thus finally focused on the king Rājarāja himself whose portrait in the temple bears strong resemblance with Lord Śiva.[33]

Rājarāja, through the construction of the Bṛhadīśvara temple, thus tried to weld together various parts of his new empire by a centralized ritual superstructure, through which he kept his feudatories in an additional, yet less vulnerable, *ritual* dependence. And he used the tributes, booties and donations for the economic development of his own nuclear area which, even in the context of his new empire, remained its most important economic basis. Moreover G.W. Spencer is certainly right when he says: "In order to understand the importance to Rajaraja of patronage to the Tanjore temple, we must recognize that such patronage, far from representing the self-glorification of a despotic ruler, was in fact a method adopted by an ambitious ruler to enhance his very uncertain power."[34]

---

[32] *SII*, Vol. II p. 92, lines 12-15. See also J. Heitzman, op. cit.

[33] Plate 8 in J. Sundaram, *The Great Temple at Tanjore*, 2nd ed., Tanjore 1958.

[34] G.W. Spencer, Religious Networks and Royal Influence in Eleventh Century South India, in: *JESHO*, 12 (1969) 45. For the economy of the Tanjore temple see *SII*, vol. II, pt. 1-4, 1891-1913.

Summarizing these considerations about royal temple policy and the structure of medieval Hindu kingdoms we may come to the following preliminary conclusions. The acknowledgement of the dominant autochthonous deities as tutelary deities by Hinduized chiefs and early Hindu rājās aimed at the consolidation of the newly established Hindu kingship *within* the nuclear areas. The function of this early religious policy thus seems to have been mainly the strengthening of *vertical* (internal) legitimation of the political hierarchy of Hindu kingship in a more egalitarian tribal society. The time of construction of huge imperial temples through the "Great Kings" (*mahā-rājas*) corresponds with the rise of the great regional kingdoms when the institution of Hindu kingship and its internal legitimation was no longer in question. The question, at that time, was only: *who* was in charge of the divine institution of Hindu kingship and its power (*kṣatra*). The Mahārājas, therefore, at that time predominantly needed a horizontal (external) legitimation against rivals, whether they were powerful feudatories (*mahā-sāmantas*) or neighbouring Mahārājas.

Though in reality the distinction between vertical and horizontal legitimation might be rather theoretical, it might help to explain another difference between the medium of religious legitimation of early and imperial Hindu kingship. Vertical legitimation within an early nuclear area seems to have required a greater degree of "mass participation". This was attained or even caused through the royally patronized cult of an autochthonous local deity. This function became most evident during the martial Durgāpūjā when lots of buffaloes and goats were sacrificed for the tutelary goddess and consumed in a holy communion "which bridges the gulf between the folk and the elite". Legitimation of royal power within the large regional Hindu kingdoms, on the other hand, seems to have aimed mainly at its horizontal recognition by rivals and potential rioters amongst the feudatories. This function appears to have been best fulfilled by the political architecture of the huge imperial temples with its Brahmin dominated courtcult and its new centralized ritual structure. The still important internal or vertical legitimation of royal power within the regional Hindu kingdoms seems to have been supported through royal patronage of holy places (*tīrtha*) of mass pilgrimage and their "royal" deities.

KING ANAṄGABHIMA, THE VERITABLE FOUNDER OF THE GAJAPATI KINGSHIP AND OF THE JAGANNĀTHA TRINITY AT PURI

The year A.D. 1230 is one of the decisive dates in the religious and political history of Eastern India. King Anaṅgabhīma of the Imperial Gaṅgas ritually dedicated his kingdom to the god Puruṣottama-Jagannātha[1] of Puri and acknowledged the divinity of Puri both as the sole state deity of Orissa and as his divine overlord. Henceforward Anaṅgabhīma and his successors claimed to rule under divine order *(ādeśa)* and as son *(putra)* and vassal *(rāuta)* of the Lord of Puri. It was most probably during the same year that Anaṅgabhīma introduced the deity Balabhadra into the present Jagannātha trinity of Puri. Thus the year 1230 marks both the establishment of the ideology of the Gajapati kingship of Orissa, and the final formation of the Jagannātha cult of Puri.

Until recently,[2] it had been unanimously accepted that the present trinity of Puri, consisting of Jagannātha, Balabhadra and Subhadrā together with Sudarśana, already existed when Coḍagaṅga began to construct the monumental Jagannātha temple in about 1136,[3] or even long before. However, a thorough study of all available source material has shown that we do not possess any reliable

---

[1] According to the epigraphical evidence, until 1309 the God of Puri was referred to by the name Puruṣottama. It was only during the reign of king Bhānudeva II that the name Jagannātha appeared in inscriptions in Srikurman (A.D. 1309, *EI*, V, 35) and in Simhachalam (A.D. 1319, *SII*, VI, No. 714). D.C. Sircar, Gaṅga Bhānudeva II and Puruṣottama-Jagannātha, in: *JKHRS*, I, 3 (1946) 251-53.

[2] Harekrishna Mahtab, *History of Orissa*, Cuttack, 1960, II, 504-26 (App. IV: "The Cult of Jagannatha"); K.N. Mahapatra, The Worship of Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra, in: *Shree Jagannath Smarika*, New Delhi 1970, pp. 49-51; K.C. Mishra, *The Cult of Jagannath*, Calcutta 1971, 30ff.

[3] For the date of the Jagannātha temple see H. von Stietencron, The Date of the Jagannātha Temple: Literary Sources Reconsidered, in: M.N. Das (ed.), *Sidelights on History and Culture of Orissa*, Cuttack 1978, pp. 516-31, according to whom the temple was constructed by Coḍagaṅga and his sons between 1136-47 and 1193-97 A.D.

evidence to corroborate this assumption.[4] From all our historical documents, both epigraphic and literary, we learn only about the existence of Puruṣottama, who resides in his *kṣetra* together with Kamalā[5] or Lakṣmī. Most important in this connection is the famous Dasgoba copper-plate inscription of Coḍagaṅga's grandson, Rājarāja III (1198-1211). This inscription elaborately describes the happiness of the god Puruṣottama when he was able to move, together with his wife Lakṣmī, into the new temple, built by Gaṅgeśvara (i.e. Coḍagaṅga).[6] The mere argument that Balabhadra is not mentioned does not, of course, prove that he was not included at that time. Yet the fact of mentioning Lakṣmī as wife of Puruṣottama precludes the existence of Balabhadra in a trinity together with them. According to the traditional taboo, Balabhadra, as the elder brother of Puruṣottama (Kṛṣṇa), is not allowed to see his younger sister-in-law. In fact, this taboo could have been one of the reasons why the wife Lakṣmī was "exchanged" for the sister Subhadrā when Balabhadra was introduced into the present

---

[4] H. Kulke, Some Remarks about the Jagannātha Trinity, in: *Indologen-Tagung 1971*, edited by H. Härtel and V. Moeller, Wiesbaden 1973, 126-39; G.C. Tripathi, The Concept of Puruṣottama in the Āgamas, in: *CJ*, p. 53; A. Eschmann, H. Kulke, G.C. Tripathi, The Formation of the Jagannātha Triad, in: ibid., p. 169-96; H. Kulke, *Jagannātha-Kult und Gajapati Königtum. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte religiöser Legitimation hinduistischer Herrscher,* Wiesbaden 1979, pp. 49-58.

[5] Murāri describes in his *Anangharāghava* the *yātrā* of the god Puruṣottama being worshipped at the seashore together with his consort Kamalā, sitting on his lap. For Murāri and his date see H. von Stietencron, The Advent of Viṣṇuism in Orissa: an Outline of its History According to Archaeological and Epigraphical Sources from the Gupta Period up to 1135 A.D., in: *CJ*, pp. 15 f. and 67.

[6] According to the Dasgoba copper-plate grant of Rājarāja III (Coḍagaṅga's grandson) of the year 1198 (*EI*, XXXI, 225, v.27-8): "What king can be named that could erect a temple to such a god as Purushottama, whose feet are the earth, whose navel the entire sky, whose ears the cardinal points, whose eyes the sun and moon and whose head the heaven above? This task which had been hitherto neglected by previous kings, was fulfilled by the lord of the Gaṅgas" (i.e. Coḍagaṅga). "The ocean is the birth-place of Lakshmī; so thinking, in his father-in-law's house Vishṇu lodged with some shame though he got full adoration. Thus ashamed, the god Purushottama was glad to get his new house; and Lakshmī too, gladly preferred living in her husband's new house to living in her father's house". (translation by M.M. Chakravarti, The Date of the Jagannath Temple in Puri, in: *JASB*, 67 (1889) 328).

trinity.[7] Coḍagaṅga's temple at Puri would therefore have been built only for Puruṣottama and his divine wife Lakṣmī.

In view of these arguments it should not be at all astonishing that the first historical evidence proving beyond doubt the existence of a trinity at Puri comes from an inscription of the year 1237 at the Pātāleśvara temple in Puri. For the first time *Halin* (Balabhadra), *Cakrin* (Kṛṣṇa-Puruṣottama) and *Subhadrā* are mentioned.[8] The relationship of these deities with the Puruṣottama cult and their relevance for our problem, become clear from the donative inscription of the Ananta-Vāsudeva temple in Bhubaneswar, built by Anaṅgabhīma's daughter in the year 1278.[9] The inscription states that this temple was dedicated to a trinity consisting of Baladeva (Balabhadra), Kṛṣṇa and Subhadrā. The same inscription further designates the temple of these three deities as "the temple of Puruṣottama" *(prasādaṃ puruṣottamasya)*. The fact that this temple, dedicated to the same three deities as were mentioned in Anaṅgabhīma's Pātāleśvara inscription, is described as "temple of Puruṣottama", shows that the trinity mentioned in Puri in the year 1237 must have also been a Puruṣottama trinity. The year 1237 thus can be accepted as the date *before* which *(terminus ante quem)* the formation of the Jagannātha trinity must have taken place.

As a provisional date *after* which *(terminus post quem)* the trinity must finally have been formed, we have already accepted the year 1198, when Rājarāja's III Dasgoba plates were issued, still mentioning only Puruṣottama and Lakṣmī. But we can go a step further. In the year 1216 we come across an inscription at Draksharama in which Anaṅgabhīma III is praised as *Puruṣottamaputra, Rudraputra* and *Durgāputra.*[10] This inscription is interesting in many respects. First of all it provides the earliest known example from Orissa of

---

[7] Prof. G.N. Dash of Berhampur University drew attention to this important evidence for an analysis of the early history of the Jagannātha cult.

[8] *EI,* XXX, 202.

[9] P. Archarya, The Commemorative Inscription of the Ananta Vasudeva Temple at Bhubaneswar, in: *OHRJ*, I, 4 (1953) 274-88.

[10] *SII,* IV, no. 1329.

a king already claiming divine affiliation during his lifetime. The previously known cases of royal apotheosis related only to deceased kings. Uddyota Keśarī, for example, praised his dead father Yayāti II as "a representative *(pratinidhi)* of Madhusūdana" (Viṣṇu),[11] and Viṣṇu, the famous general of Anaṅgabhīma III, praised Coḍagaṅga, in whom "the glory of the Narasiṃha incarnation manifests itself".[12] But our main interest in Anaṅgabhīma's inscription lies in the mention of a trinity that includes for the first time Puruṣottama of Puri. Evidently the concept of this trinity still differs in many respects from the present trinity of Puri. The trinity of the Draksharama inscription comprises the three most powerful regional deities of Orissa, Puruṣottama of Puri, Śiva-Līṅgarāja of Bhubanesvar, and Durgā-Virajā at Jajpur. In 1216 Anaṅgabhīma thus claimed to be the son and earthly deputy of these three regional deities, and, at the same time, the legitimate successor to those former royal dynasties of Orissa which worshipped these deities as their tutelary deities. This first known evidence of a trinity that included Puruṣottama of Puri was therefore based on a very evident political iconology. The inscription mentioning a still all-Orissa triad of deities further provides another *terminus post quem* for the formation of the Jagannātha-Puruṣottama trinity at Puri.

Accepting the hypothesis that the Jagannātha trinity was established at some time between 1216 and 1237, we can proceed a step further in dating this major event in the religious history of Orissa. Whereas the Draksharama inscription put the god Puruṣottama on an equal level with the other two regional deities of Orissa, the year 1230 marks a decisive step in favour of Puri and its deity. In an inscription at Bhubaneswar, dated 9.1.1230, King Anaṅgabhīma is praised only as the son of Puruṣottama; Durgā and Rudra are no longer mentioned.[13] On 23.2.1230, after taking

[11] In the Narsingpur inscription of Udyota Keśarī, in: *IO*, VI, 227.

[12] In the Chateśvara temple inscription, in: *EI*, XXIX, 126.

[13] Bhubaneswar inscription no. I of Anaṅgabhīma III, in: *EI*, XXX, p. 235. See also D.C. Sircar, Some Facts of Early Orissa History. IV. Gaṅga Anaṅgabhīma III, in: *JIH*, 35 (1957) 75-89 and D.C. Sircar, *Studies in the Religious Life of Ancient and Medieval India, 1971,* pp. 70 ff.

a ritual bath in the Mahanadi, he donated land to Puruṣottama and his priests.[14] Shortly afterwards, on 20.3.1230, his wife donated valuable presents to the god Allāḷanātha in far-off Kanchipuram, and announced that her royal husband was the son of god Puruṣottama and that he ruled under his divine order *(ādeśa)*.[15] Two months later, on 14.5.1230, king Anaṅgabhīma undertook a pilgrimage to Puruṣottamakṣetra and again donated land to the god and to a priest. In the same year a new Puruṣottama temple was constructed in his new capital Cuttack which he proudly called *Abhinava Vārāṇasī*. On 4.1.1231 he held a *darśana* of Lord Puruṣottama at the Cuttack temple and again donated tax-free land to the god and his priests.[16]

The years 1237 and 1238 witness an even further development of this Puruṣottama-Jagannātha kingship ideology. Whereas Anaṅgabhīma's earlier inscriptions began with a reference to "the prosperous and victorious reign of king Anaṅgabhīma", in 1237 an inscription commenced with a reference to "the prosperous and victorious reign of [the god] Puruṣottama".[17] In A.D. 1238 the king even counted his own regnal years as *aṅka* years of his divine overlord Puruṣottama.[18]

The *Mādaḷā Pāñji* temple chronicle of Puri, despite the generally-alleged unreliability of its earlier parts, seems to have preserved this tradition, although there it is wrongly ascribed to Anaṅgabhīma II. "'Our name is [from now onwards] given as Puruṣottama.' Staying at the town of Cuttack, he dedicated everything to the god Śrī Jagannātha and remained his deputy. Anaṅgabhīma Deva and Puruṣottama Deva (Anaṅgabhīma's second name) had no consecration in the first regnal year. The great Lord *Jagannātha, the king of*

---

[14] Cf. the Nagari Plates of Anaṅgabhīma III, Saka 1151 and 1152 (edited by D.C. Sircar), in: *EI*, XXVIII, 235-58, especially 256.

[15] *EI*, XXXI, 96.

[16] Nagari plates, in: *EI*, XXVIII, 257.

[17] Puri inscription, in: *EI*, XXX, 197 ff.

[18] D.C. Sircar, Two Lingaraja Temple Inscriptions, in: *Indian Culture*, VI, 1939-40, 71 ff.

the Orissan empire, had ordered it accordingly".[19] According to the *Mādaḷā Pāñji* it was Anaṅgabhīma who established the traditional 36 kinds of services *(niyogas)* at the Jagannātha temple, and made extensive land donations to the temple. As we shall see later, the *Mādaḷā Pāñji* also wrongly ascribes the construction of the Jagannātha temple to Anaṅgabhīma III.

From our present epigraphic knowledge we can therefore deduce that the thirties of the thirteenth century unquestionably mark the final foundation of the kingship ideology of the Gajapatis, who not only claimed to rule as sons *(putra)* and vassals *(rāuta)* of Lord Puruṣottama-Jagannātha but also began to count their own regnal years as the *aṅkas* of their divine overlord. The first Orissa king who became known by the title Gajapati ("Lord of the Elephants") was Anaṅgabhīma's son Narasiṃha I, the builder of the famous Sūrya temple at Konarak.[20] This title became the most popular name of the kings of Orissa under the Sūryavaṃśīs (1434-1542),[21] and even today the most important rituals of the Rājā of Puri are called *Gajapatimahārāja Sevā.*

Before coming back to our hypothesis that the Jagannātha trinity, too, was established during the year 1230, let us look at the political situation in that year. The major political event in central and South India during the years preceding 1230 was the rapid disintegration of the Cōḷa empire, which had dominated the peninsula for several centuries. Several former feudatories declared their independence and fought for the imperial heritage. This war of succession reached a dramatic culmination in the years 1230/31, when the Cōḷa Emperor Rājarāja III was taken prisoner by a former feudatory, and when another feudatory occupied the important provincial capital Kanchipuram. It cannot be a mere

---

19 *Mādaḷā Pāñji*, edited by A.B. Mohanty, repr. Bhubaneswar 1969, pp. 27: *Anaṅgabhīma Deva ... kohile, āmbha nāā Puruṣottama debe. E nagara Katake thāi Śrī Puruṣottama Śrī Jagannātha Devaṅka samasta samarpi rāutapane thāānti Anaṅgabhīma Deva o Puruṣottama Deva madhya rajā 2 aṅka abhiṣeka na hele. Oḍiśa rājya rajā Śrī Jagannātha Mahāprabhu emanta kahi abhiṣeka nohile.*

20 Kapilas inscription, in: *EI*, XXXIII, 41-5.

21 P. Mukherjee, *History of the Gajapati Kings of Orissa and their Successors,* Calcutta 1953; R. Subrahmanyam, *The Sūryavaṃśī Gajapatis of Orissa,* Waltair 1957.

coincidence that Anaṅgabhīma had his wife announce his new divine kingship during that critical year and that he chose the very centre of the power struggle in South India to proclaim his new status. Since the donation inscription of his wife clearly states that he ruled under the order *(ādeśa)* of Lord Puruṣottama at his new capital *Abhinava Vārāṇasī*, he seemed to have claimed leadership among the Hindu rājās by means of the heritage of Benares, which had been conquered only a few decades before by Muslim troops. The foundation of the ideology of the Gajapati kingship under Anaṅgabhīma III in the year 1230 thus obviously had a very direct political implication.[22]

Let us now come back to the Puruṣottama-Jagannātha trinity, the formation of which we had hypothetically located in the period between 1215 and 1237. The addition of a third deity to an already existing divine couple certainly must have been a major interference with the established cult at one of India's most sacred *kṣetras*. If such an event was allowed to take place, it must have been connected with another major event in the religious history of that *kṣetra*. It is my inference from the above-mentioned evidence that such a major event indeed occurred in the very year 1230, when Anaṅgabhīma III acknowledged Puruṣottama as the divine overlord of his empire. The dedication of the empire to "the Lord Jagannātha, the king of the Orissan Empire", combined with vast land donations to the temple at Puri, and the formation of the trinity at Puri, must have formed an integrated part of an overall restructuring of the ritual policy.

As a security measure against apprehended Muslim attacks from the north he retreated with his capital from Chaudwar, situated on the northern bank of the Mahanadi river. He founded Cuttack on an island in the Mahanadi river itself, which he significantly called "Abhinava Vārāṇasī". He acknowledged the god of Puri as the true "Lord of Orissa" and claimed to rule as his earthly deputy. In order to strengthen his relation with his divine overlord further, he had

---

[22] On the concept of "Viṣṇu as Chieftain and King" see Friedhelm Hardy, Ideology and Cultural Context of the Śrīvaiṣṇava Temple, in: *IESHR*, 14, 1977 (= B. Stein [ed.], *South Indian Temples)*, 119-51 (particularly pp. 132-5). For the role of an imperial temple (Rājarājeśvara at Tanjore) see G.W. Spencer, Religious Networks and Royal Influence in Eleventh Century South India, in: *JESHO*, 12 (1969) 42-56.

his own Puruṣottama temple constructed at Abhinava Vārānasī. It must have been in connection with these important events of the year 1230 that Anaṅgabhīma III introduced Balabhadra into the Jagannātha temple at Puri.[23]

Even if one is willing to follow these inferences up to this point, the immediate reaction may be to ask why this interference with an established cult had taken place, and whether there was any necessity for such an unusual step. For an answer to this question one has again to look both at the religious and the political developments. With Rāmānuja, the great South Indian philosopher and reformer (c. 1056-1136), a new wave of Pāñcarātra philosophy came to Orissa. As pointed out elsewhere, "the Pāñcarātra system emphasized Kṛṣṇa's relations to his sister Ekānaṃśā and his brother Balarāma-Saṃkarṣana. Ekānaṃśā was interpreted as a form of Durgā, and Balarāma as a form of Śiva. Moreover the worship of Sudarśana was emphasized as well, and it was conceived as an embodiment of Narasiṃha. Thus the Pāñcarātra system was almost ideally able to take up the most important elements of the Jagannātha cult. The main deity Puruṣottama was reinterpreted as Kṛṣṇa. Subhadrā, from the very beginning, had features of Durgā, for her iconography had originated from the identification of a tribal deity with a Śākta goddess. To interpret her as Ekānaṃśā-Durgā thus meant only to re-emphasize her Śākta character. Śaivite elements had been present in the early Puruṣottama-Narasiṃha

---

[23] In the undated Edilpur inscription king Keśavasena claims that his father Lakṣmaṇasena (1179-1205) erected pillars of victory and sacrificial posts at Benares and Allahabad and "on the coast of the southern sea (near?) the *vedī*, the abode of Balabhadra and Kṛṣṇa" *(velāyām dakṣiṇābher Musaladhara-Gadāpāṇi-saṃvāsa-vedyāṃ)* which could only mean Puri, N.G. Majumdar, *Inscription of Bengal*, 1929, III, 118-32, sl. 13; see also K.S. Behera, Antiquity of the Deity Puruṣottama-Jagannātha at Puri, in: *Bharati-Utkal University, Humanities*, VII, 13 (1973) 19-29. Keśavasena's claim that his father's armies conquered Orissa up to Puri is not corroborated by any contemporary evidence, and has therefore most likely no value for the *political* history of Lakṣmanasena. It may, however, be of great interest for our study of the *religious* developments at Puri during Keśavasena's time, since it mentions Balabhadra together with Kṛṣṇa at Puri. Since Keśavasena ruled from about 1225 "till at least A.D. 1230" (R.C. Majumdar, *The History of Bengal*, 1971, I, 227) his undated Edilpur inscription may well reflect the events at Puri during the year 1230, when, according to our hypothesis, Balabhadra was included in the triad of Puri. If this interpretation of Keśavasena's Edilpur inscription proves correct, it would be an important corroboration for the date of the installation of the Jagannātha trinity at Puri.

cult. Moreover, snake-worship had been very popular in Orissa. These elements could be reinterpreted as pertaining to Balabhadra-Śiva. And the Narasiṃha character of the Jagannātha cult could also be taken up and focussed on the Sudarśana worship".[24] The Pāñcarātra system was therefore ideally applicable to Puri and to the Jagannātha cult with its various aspects and affiliations. This provided an excellent and, at that time, a most up-to-date basis for a new systematization of the multifaceted cult of Puruṣottama before it was elevated to the state cult of Orissa.

However, there seems to have been another, perhaps even more important reason that led to the official introduction of Balabhadra into the cult of Puri. As mentioned above, Anaṅgabhīma had been praised in the Daksharama inscription of the year 1216 as son of the three deities Puruṣottama, Rudra and Durgā. This early triad most probably already contained the germ for the future Pāñcarātra re-interpretation of the cult of Puri, since it associated Puruṣottama with Durgā and Rudra. Particularly conspicous in this respect is the epigraphic mention of Rudra instead of Śiva, because it is Śiva in the form of *Rudra*-Saṃkarṣaṇa who played an important role in the Pāñcarātra.[25]

It is, of course, difficult to decide whether this triad of 1216 was in essence already regarded as a Pāñcarātra trinity, or whether it was just a conglomeration of the three most important regional deities of which Anaṅgabhīma claimed to be the son. But it seems obvious that the Pāñcarātra system provided the unique possibility for fully integrating the three main regional deities of Orissa into the new state cult. Perhaps even more important, the Pāñcarātra system allowed not only to *integrate* but, at the same time, to *subordinate* the regional deities of Orissa: Śiva-Liṅgarāja and Durgā-Virajā in their Pāñcarātra blend became Saṃkarṣaṇa-Balabhadra and Ekānaṃśā-Subhadrā under Puruṣottama-Kṛṣṇa. Of course, acknowledging Puruṣottama as the sole and supreme state deity, meant for king Anaṅgabhīma also an elevation of his own status as the earthly deputy. It is therefore difficult to imagine a system more suitable than the Pāñcarātra for the creation of the

---

[24] Eschmann, Kulke, and Tripathi, op. cit. in: *CJ*, p. 185.

[25] e.g. *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, V, 25, 2, 3.

new state religion of Orissa, centred on the Puruṣottama-Jagannātha cult of Puri.

In reconstructing the early history of the Jagannātha cult, another problem remains unsolved. All legendary accounts about the origin of the Jagannātha cult narrate the story of the original miraculous *stone* image of Nīlamādhava, worshipped by the Śabara tribe. When king Indradyumna of Mālava in Western India heard about this famous manifestation of Viṣṇu, he went with his army to Orissa in order to worship it. However, when the king arrived at Nīlagiri (Puri), the Nīlamādhava image had disappeared. Viṣṇu, nevertheless, promised the heart-broken Indradyumna that he would manifest himself again in a piece of wood, out of which the king, with the help of Viṣṇu, would later carve the *wooden* images of the trinity.

If the Indradyumna legend contains a genuine historical tradition, the Jagannātha cult would form a rare example of a "retribalization" of an already established and Hinduized indigenous cult. The probability of such an interpretation had never been categorically discarded, yet no one had seriously tried to analyse the legend in the context of historical developments, in order to arrive at a probable date for the event. This was done only recently by R. Geib in his thorough study of the different versions of the Indradyumna legend.[26] He came to the conclusion that this *Kultwandel* ("change of cult") must have taken place some time *after* 1278, the year when Anaṅgabhīma's daughter dedicated the Ananta Vāsudeva temple at Bhubaneswar to the Puruṣottama trinity, because its sculptures were of stone with standard Hindu iconography, and not of wood with archaic features. Geib therefore concluded that in 1278 the sculptures at Puri must have also been stone images. As the possible date of their later exchange for the present wooden images he suggests the early 14th century, when another important change in the cult took place. In the years 1309 and 1319 for the first time (according to our knowledge of the historical evidence)

---

[26] R. Geib, *Die Indradyumna-Legende. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Jagannātha-Kultes*, Wiesbaden 1975.

the god of Puri was praised with the new and thenceforth most popular title *Jagannātha* "Lord of the Universe".[27]

The question therefore still remains to be settled, whether Anaṅgabhīma dedicated his empire to Puruṣottama in the form of his present wooden image (*dāru mūrti*), or in the form of a stone image, which only later on was exchanged for the *dāru mūrti*. The iconographic and epigraphic evidence speaks clearly in favour of the wooden image. In Konarak, at the famous sun temple, built by Anaṅgabhīma's son Narasiṃha I, we find several excellent images of king Narasiṃha worshipping a triad that consists of Puruṣottama, Durgā, and a Śivaliṅgam.[28]

In all these Konarak sculptures, which represent the first visual evidence for Jagannātha-Puruṣottama, the god of Puri is depicted in his characteristic archaic form, which strongly resembles the wooden pillar-deities that are still worshipped in the tribal hinterland of Jagannātha. It is in my opinion rather unlikely that Anaṅgabhīma's son Narasiṃha would have depicted Puruṣottama in this exceptional form, if, at the same time, the god had been worshipped at Puri in a stone *mūrti* of pure Hindu iconography. The same argument is true in regard to an even earlier piece of epigraphic evidence. In the year 1150, Kasturikāmodinī, the wife of Coḍagaṅga, dedicated a Dadhivāmana temple to the memory of her deceased husband. Dadhivāmana is always represented by the "single wooden god". It is again most unlikely that Coḍagaṅga's faithful wife, only three years after Coḍagaṅga's death, would have dedicated his memorial temple to a wooden image of Puruṣottama-Dadhivāmana if the god to whom Codagaṅga himself had dedicated his life work was worshipped at Puri in the form of a stone image.[29] From all these evidences we can safely infer that in 1150

---

[27] ibid., p. 134.

[28] For a more detailed study of the sculptures see Kulke, 1979, 60-3; also O.M. Starza-Majewski's excellent article, King Narasimha before his Spiritual Preceptor, in: *JRAS*, 1971, 134-8; A.K. Bhattacharya, Konarak and its Builder, in: *Oriental Art*, 6 (1960) 32 ff.; Debala Mitra, Notes on Konarak, in: *JASL*, 3, 2 (1961) 53-62.

[29] H. von Stietencron, Early Temples of Jagannātha in Orissa: the Formative Phase, in: *CJ*, pp. 77f.

and 1250 Puruṣottama was worshipped in Puri as an image which must have been very similar to that which we know from Konarak.

In the year 1230 Anaṅgabhīma therefore acknowledged Puruṣottama in his *dāru mūrti* as the state deity of Orissa. From this conclusion we can further infer that the whole trinity, which was established by Anaṅgabhīma in about 1230, also existed in the form of simple wooden images. The Indradyumna legend, the oldest version of which is known from the Puruṣottama Māhātmya of the *Skandapurāṇa* (which may be dated from the early 14th century),[30] was therefore most probably introduced in order to explain the unusual wooden figure of Lord Jagannātha. The Puruṣottama Māhātmya provides ample evidence to show that, at the time of its composition, groups of orthodox Brahmins still seemed to have been very reluctant to acknowledge fully the *dāru mūrti* as the supreme manifestation of the "Highest Being" (*Puruṣottama*) and "Lord of the Universe" (*Jagannātha*).[31]

Anaṅgabhīma III, however, may well have been associated with a stone image of Puruṣottama in another way to which I finally wish to draw attention - even if the conclusion must remain hypothetical. Although we came to the conclusion that Puruṣottama-Jagannātha was certainly worshipped in the time of Anantavarman Coḍagaṅga, and perhaps from time immemorial, as a wooden image, there is no need to discard the Nīlamādhava legend completely, once and forever. It is quite possible that, at a certain stage in the development of the Jagannātha cult, a Vaiṣṇava stone sculpture of standard Hindu iconography was added to the existing wooden images. We know many examples from Orissa which show that indigenous aniconic *mūrtis* were often supplemented (but not necessarily replaced) at a later stage by stone or brass images. The latter used to remain either permanently in the *sanctum sanctorum*, or became "movable images" (*calantī pratimā*) which were taken out during temple festivals as a proxy for the main or original

---

[30] Geib, 1975, p. 134; and G.C. Tripathi, in: *CJ*, p. 54.

[31] Geib deals extensively with this aspect of the Indradyumna legend (p. 131 ff.). His argument that the Indradyumna legend was introduced in order to justify the worship of the unusual wooden images is certainly correct. However, to my understanding the necessity to "legitimize" the images did not arise after an alleged *Kultwandel* ("change of cult"), but after their recognition as state deities of the Orissa empire.

image (*mūla bera*). A good example is Maṇināgeśvarī, a powerful goddess known since the late 6th century A.D. She resides on the steep Maṇināga mountain near Ranpur in central Orissa and is worshipped by the ex-feudatory Rājās of Ranpur as their family deity. Her *mūrti* is a round, flat, and purely aniconic stone image. Behind this *mūla bera*, at a later date, two excellent images of Cāmuṇḍā (perhaps 14th - 15th centuries) have been placed, which are also considered to represent Maṇināgeśvarī. As in Puri, a legendary account is related about an allegedly lost original cult-image of pure Hindu iconography. In this legend at Ranpur, thieves from a neighbouring place are accused of having tried to steal the valuable image of Maṇināgeśvarī. The Rājā of Ranpur therefore is said to have buried her recovered image under the round stone, which is thus thought to seal the hiding spot of the "true" image. Another story tries to explain the peculiar shape of the round stone as the original base of the famous Nīlamādhava sculpture, before it was taken away by king Indradyumna.[32] All these rather late legends have the clear aetiological function of explaining why Maṇināgeśvarī, the *iṣṭadevatā* of the Ranpur rāj family, is worshipped in an unusual aniconic stone symbol.

Other examples are the Liṅgarāja at Bhubaneswar and the Khila Muṇḍā at Mandasa (Mañjūṣā) in northern Andhra Pradesh. The cult idol of Liṅgarāja is in no way an orthodox Śivaliṅga, but a heap of stones that look very similar to the various *grāma devatās* or village deities of Orissa. The *Ekāmrapurāṇa* of Bhubaneswar again tries to explain this unorthodox feature of the "King of the Liṅgas", whose *calantī pratimā* is an excellent brass image of Candraśekhara. Khiḷā Muṇḍā, the *iṣṭadevatā* of the Rājās of Mandasa, is still worshipped in her place of origin in the form of a long bamboo stick, just as we find among the Saora tribes. In the palace of Mandasa, however, Khiḷā Muṇḍā is worshipped in the form of a beautiful image of Durgā-Mahiṣāsuramardinī.[33]

It is therefore quite possible that a stone or brass image of Hindu iconography was introduced into the Jagannātha cult. It would,

---

[32] See also Kulke, 1979, 21 ff.

[33] In J. Kavyabisarada (ed.), *Mañjūṣā Rājavaṃśānucaritam*, Puri 1915, p. 22, the goddess is called *Khilamuṇḍā Bhagavatī* and *Vaṃśadaṇḍadevī*.

indeed, be rather astonishing if, during one or other phase of the ritual development of the Jagannātha cult, such a supplementary image had not existed in that temple. And since Nīlamādhava was one of the most (if not the most) popular Viṣṇu images in central Orissa during the 9th - 11th centuries,[34] there is no reason to reject the likelihood of the existence of a Nīlamādhava image in the Jagannātha temple during that period.

Nowadays, however, apart from the small wooden Nīlamādhava image (which is actually nothing but a Jagannātha in miniature) on the *ratnasiṃhāsana*, no genuine Nīlamādhava image exists in the Jagannātha temple. If one had ever existed, it must have been taken away. Apart from forcible removal at a time of military conquest, however, usually such images are not transferred to another place. Yet there are circumstances that permit even the peaceful removal of a Hindu image from a temple, in order to install it elsewhere. Evidence of this kind is known in the case of the *iṣṭadevatās* of royal families or the *rāṣṭradevatās* of kingdoms. In the process of acknowledging and patronizing a powerful indigenous god or goddess as their tutelary deity, the rājās sooner or later would have wished to worship their respective deity at their own palace in the form of a wholly Hinduized image. For this purpose either a completely new image was created, or the Hindu image, which existed already at the original place of worship, was taken to the capital. There, worship was taken over by the *rājagurus*, either inside the palace or in a new temple nearby. The story of the so-called "exchange" of the Nīlamādhava image for Puruṣottama's *dāru mūrti*, as related in the Indradyumna legend, might have originated out of such a situation.

From Anaṅgabhīma's famous Nagari inscription we know that he had a new Puruṣottama temple constructed or consecrated in the same year 1230, when he acknowledged Puruṣottama as the state deity of Orissa.[35] The Puruṣottama image in this new temple was certainly either newly created or an old one which Anaṅga-bhīma had brought from Puri. The question, which sculpture was

---

[34] See von Stietencron, in: *CJ*, pp. 21 f. and V. Dahejia, *Early Stone Temples of Orissa*, New Delhi 1978, pp. 129 f.

[35] Nagari inscription, lines 126 ff. (cf. n. 14, above).

installed at Cuttack, cannot be answered definitely. But from the above-mentioned considerations, and the strong persistence of the Nīlamādhava tradition in the early texts of the Jagannātha cult, we can infer that the "lost stone image" of Nīlamādhava could have been installed by Anaṅgabhīma in Cuttack in the year 1230.

This hypothesis can partly be verified by an independent source. In the year 1361, 131 years after the consecration of the new Puruṣottama temple at Cuttack, Orissa was temporarily conquered by the Sultān of Delhi, Fīrūz Shāh. During the raid, the Jagannātha temple in the capital was looted and the stone image of Jagannātha destroyed.[36] The explicit mention of a *stone* image of Jagannātha at Cuttack is certainly remarkable; but it is, of course, not a sufficient proof to establish conclusively the hypothesis that the "lost" Nīlamādhava sculpture had been taken by Anaṅgabhīma III to Cuttack in the year 1230, and been destroyed there 131 years later by Fīrūz Shāh.

Despite the uncertainty about the fate of the alleged Nīlamādhava sculpture, it has been shown that we have ample evidence to prove the epochal importance of the year 1230 for the further history of Orissa. This marked the beginning of the Gajapati kingship, which influenced deeply the future history of Orissa and of greater parts of eastern India up to the 19th century.[37] It also marked the final establishment of the Jagannātha cult in its present shape and theology, which formed and still forms the very backbone of the cultural and religious development of Orissa. Anaṅgabhīma therefore can without hesitation be designated as the veritable founder of the Gajapati kingship and of the worship of Jagannātha in its present form.

It was perhaps this tremendous impact of Anaṅgabhīma on the Jagannātha cult which, according to the Temple Chronicles of Puri, caused him to be identified as builder of the Jagannātha temple in Puri. In the late 16th or early 17th century, when the

---

[36] H.M. Elliot and J. Dowson, *The History of India as Told by its Own Historians*, London 1869, vol. III, 314; and H.K. Mahtab, Invasion of Orissa in 1360 A.D., in: *OHRJ*, I (1952) 31-5.

[37] See G.N. Dash, Jagannātha and Oriya Nationalism, in: *CJ*, pp. 359-74 and H. Kulke, Kings without a Kingdom; the Rajas of Khurda and the Jagannātha Cult, in: *South Asia*, 4 (1974) 60-77.

Mādaḷā Pānji was compiled, the greatness of his acts had overshadowed the earlier history of Puri.[38] The priests of Jagannātha had forgotten the achievements of Anantavarman Coḍagaṅga, who had built the monumental Jagannātha temple; and who had thus founded the very source of their livelihood. It was left to the historians of the late 19th and 20th centuries to rediscover Coḍagaṅga as the builder of the Jagannātha temple.[39] Yet his great achievements should not overshadow the fundamental contributions of his great-grandson Anaṅgabhīma III, who has not yet received proper recognition from historians.

---

38 For another reason of Coḍagaṅga's neglect in the temple chronicle see chapter 10.

39 Chakravarti, *JASB*, 67 (1898) 328: P. Archarya, Date of the Lingaraja Temple at Bhubaneswar and the Jagannātha Temple at Puri, in: P. Acharya, *Studies in Orissa History, Art and Archaeology,* Baripada 1969, pp. 292-6; and von Stietencron, op.cit. (see above note 3)

JAGANNĀTHA UNDER MUSLIM RULE[1]

I

The period of Muslim rule in Orissa, particularly relating to the cult of Jagannātha, has often been regarded as a period of intolerance and oppression. Recent research on Orissa[2] has modified this picture considerably. Despite religious fanaticism there were also decades of religious tolerance and mutual cooperation for the welfare of the country. It was this period when Salbeg, the celebrated devotional Muslim poet of Orissa, as a son of a Muslim father and a Brahmin mother, composed his famous *bhajanas* in honour of Lord Jagannātha.[3]

The present paper tries to throw some light on the role played by the Jagannātha cult and its temple at Puri during this period of socio-political and cultural change in Orissa. It shows that the Jagannātha cult and its temple at Puri, after the initial onslaught by the Afghans, regained and even strengthened their position as the most important religious institutions of Hinduism in eastern India during Mughal rule. But this paper also reveals that, because of this important position, the Jagannātha temple and its priests were again and again dragged into the power-struggle of the time. However, in most of these cases it appears to have been the tragic consequence of the greatness of the *baḍa deuḷa* rather than due to religious intolerance.

The years 1565 and 1568 were an important turningpoint in Indian history. In 1565 the kingdom of Vijayanagara was defeated by the

---

[1] The article was originally published in German. It was translated by Berhard Fell, Trivandrum.

[2] B.C. Ray, *Orissa under the Mughals*, Calcutta 1981 and M.A. Haque, *Muslim Administration in Orissa (1568-1751 A.D.)*, Calcutta 1980.

[3] Nilamani Mishra, Salbeg a Celebrated Devotional Muslim Poet of Orissa, in: *Impact of Islam on Orissan Culture. Celebration of 1400 Hijri Era*, published by the Government of Orissa, Cuttack 1981.

united Sultanates of the Deccan. Only three years later the Gajapatis kingdom of Orissa met with the same fate. After centuries of successful defence this erstwhile most powerful Hindu kingdom of eastern India, too, fell an easy prey to the armies of the Afghan Sultanate of Bengal. These two battles finally ended the period of the great medieval Hindu kingdoms. During the next two centuries the Muslim rule in India reached its zenith under the great Mughals.

One of the less known aspects is the role which sacred centres of the former Hindu kingdoms, the great Hindu places of pilgrimage (*tīrtha*) and the temple cities played during this period. After the downfall of the great regional Hindu kingdoms which had patronized them for centuries, these sacred places were an important element in the reestablishment and consolidation of local or regional Hindu successor states. In many cases their legitimization was based on the protection and patronage of these *tīrthas*. Less known, however, is the fact that these *tīrthas* and their cults were sometimes tolerated or even controlled by Muslim rulers to stabilize their own rule in Hindu regions and, of course, to tap the source of pilgrim tax. The Jagannātha temple at Puri provides an excellent example of this struggle for the control of these *tīrthas* between the local Hindu rājās and the Muslim rulers of eastern India.

After the conquest of Cuttack in 1568, the Muslim general Kālapāhār captured Puri with a small unit, plundered the legendary temple treasure of Jagannātha and desecrated and damaged the temple. Most probably with the help of an Oriya, Kālapāhār discovered the hidden image of Jagannātha, burnt it and afterwards cast it into the sea, or - according to the Oriya chronicles[4] - took it on an elephant to the Ganges and had it burnt there. After its desecration, Puri "the stronghold of Jagannāth (was made) into the home of Islām" as Badā'ūnī was to write a few decades later.[5]

During the following 180 years more than a dozen times the priests of Puri had to hide the renewed image of Jagannātha in the inaccessible mountains of south Orissa or on some islands in the

---

[4] *Cakoḍā Pothi o Cakoḍā Basāṇa ba Cayinī Cakoḍā*, p. 5, ed. by S. Pattanaik, Cuttack 1959; *Mādaḷā Pāñji*, p. 61, ed. by A.B. Mohanty, repr. Bhubaneswar 1969.

[5] *Muntakhabu-t-Tawārīkh*, vol. II, p. 166, transl. by W.H. Lowe, 2nd ed., Calcutta 1924.

Chilka lake. For more than thirty years the "Lord of the World" was thus either absent from his *ratnasiṃhāsana* throne in Puri or - during the reign of Aurangzeb - was forcibly put under lock and key in his temple. It is understandable that in Orissa Kālapāhār became the embodiment of a furious iconoclast and the successive treatment of the Jagannātha cult under the Mughals is still taken as an example of the religious intolerance of Muslim rulers of India against Hinduism.

However, an analysis of all available evidence provides a far more different picture of the events. It reveals to what extent the initial fight of the Afghans *against* the Jagannātha cult turned under the Mughals into a struggle *for* the control of the temple city. This struggle was between the local Rājās of Khurda in central Orissa, the priests of Puri, and the Muslim governors (*sūbahdār*) in Cuttack. It culminated in the events during the year 1735/6 when a Muslim Sūbahdār of Orissa, against the resistence of the Hindu rājā of central Orissa, but with obvious support of the priests of Puri, forcibly brought back the image of Jagannātha from its hiding place in south Orissa and reestablished the cult at Puri.

II

In order to understand the significance of this power struggle it is neccessary to turn for a short while to the earlier history of Orissa and the Jagannātha temple. Puri and its cult rose into prominence under Coḍagaṅga, the Eastern Gaṅga king of Kalinga who began to build the present monumental Jagannātha temple some decades after he had conquered Orissa in 1112 A.D. The construction of a huge temple for Puruṣottama-Jagannātha by the "outsider" Coḍagaṅga was both an act of reverence to an important local deity of Orissa and a chance of uniting various cults of Orissa in the syncretistic concept of the new state ideology of the Gaṅgas. In the year 1230 Coḍagaṅga's great-grandson Anaṅgabhīma III took a decisive step for the future religious and ideological development of Orissa. He dedicated his whole empire to Jagan-

nātha and proclaimed to rule under his overlordship (*saṁrājya*) as his viceroy (*rāuta*) and son (*putra*).[6]

There can be no doubt that this dedication of the Orissan empire to the state deity Jagannātha had a strong impact on the Oriyas and the Hindu world. Any service rendered to the king of Orissa became a service to Jagannātha, the new overlord (*sāṁrāja*) of Orissa. It is not surprising that many successors on the Gajapati throne followed his example and called themselves *rāuta* under the *sāṁrājya* of Jagannātha. Kapilendra (1430-1467 A.D.), the usurper of the Gajapati throne and founder of the powerful Sūryavaṃśa dynasty of Orissa, went a step further and proclaimed to be his first servitor (*adisebaka*). He even made Jagannātha witness of his action:

> Oh, Jagannātha! Thus prayeth Thy servant: throughout the kingdom I maintained from childhood these chiefs and gave them wealth. All of them have forsaken me. I shall deal with them (and) punish them each accordingly. Oh Lord Jagannātha! Do Thou judge ...... whether I am right or wrong.[7]

Furthermore, many of his inscriptions conclude with the explicit warning that any resistance to donation and his own royal orders constitute a treacherous attack (*droha*) upon the state deity, Jagannātha.

The most important consequence of this Jagannātha kingship ideology was the undisputed position of Jagannātha as the state deity of Orissa. Politically, it meant that only those kings who controlled Puri and its Jagannātha temple were recognized as the legitimate Gajapatis and rulers of Orissa.

III

This situation became even more evident after the downfall of the last independent Hindu dynasty of Orissa. The destruction of the central power of Orissa in 1568 by the Afghan armies and the demolition of the wooden sculpture of Jagannātha by Kālapāhār

---

[6] For details see chapter 2.

[7] Puri inscription of the year 1464, see K.B. Tripathi, *The Evolution of Oriya Language and Script*, Bhubaneswar 1962, p. 272.

seemed to have ended this system abruptly. But in the following years Rāmacandra Deva, a local raja, succeeded in building up a small kingdom in about 1580 A.D. with its capital at Khurda near Puri and to renew the Jagannātha cult at Puri after a few years.

The date of the renewal of the cult and the circumstances under which it took place are still a matter of controversy. The historians of Orissa usually accept the theory that Rāmacandra was able to perform this great du y out of his own strength already in 1575, after the Afghans had been defeated by Akbar's troops a few months earlier.[8] However, a thorough analysis of all available sources - the Persian chronicles and Puri's temple chronicles *Mādalā Pāñji* and a few inscriptions - shows that Orissa and particularly Puri remained still firmly under the Afghans till the year 1590. The several defeats of the Afghans by the Mughal army in Bengal did not mean any relaxation of their power in, or hold over central Orissa. On the contrary, Orissa increasingly became the refuge of the defeated Afghans. Furthermore we have no evidence at all that during these years they changed their hostile attitude towards the Jagannātha cult to such an extent that they might have tolerated its renewal at a time when its destruction was still remembered as a great triumph.

This situation changed only after Mānsingh, the famous Mughal general of Akbar, had defeated the Afghans again in 1590. The conclusion of a new peace treaty confirmed again the investiture of the Afghans in Orissa. But from the Akbarnāma we also learn that "an agreement was made that Jagannāth, which is a famous temple, and its environs should be made *crown land*".[9] Our sources are silent about the reasons of this unusual treaty which declared Puri, lying on the southern side of the Afghan territory, as the Mughal crown land.[10] But an analysis of the political development of eastern India reveals that this has a direct relation with the political situation in Orissa in 1590.

---

[8] K.N. Mahapatra, Gajapati Ramachandra Deva I, in: *OHRJ*, 7 (1958) 227-250.

[9] *Akbarnāma*, III, p. 934, transl. by H. Beveridge, Calcutta.

[10] B.C. Ray, Raja Mansingh and the Final Conquest of Orissa, in: *Proc. Ind. Hist. Congress*, 13 (1950) 243-256.

Shortly after the destruction of the Vijayanagara empire in 1565 Sultan Ibrāhīm of Golkonda began his conquest of the Godavari delta region which he occupied in about 1571/72. But the armies of Golkonda needed nearly two decades to subdue the powerful Hindu chiefs of Kaliṅga and south Orissa. In 1589/90 a general of Golkonda conquered south Orissa and advanced with an army up to Athagarh in Ganjam District.[11] It is astonishing that the coincidence of this event and the transformation of Puri into a Mughal crownland seem to have escaped the attention of historians. But it is unthinkable that Mānsingh should not have been well informed about these dangerous events at the southern border of Orissa when he signed the treaty with the defeated Afghans in August 1590. On the contrary, Mānsingh must have been aware of the strategic importance of Puri. It would have certainly become the next target of the expanding rival power of Golkonda, an event which would have meant the loss of the whole of Central Orissa to this southern Sultanate. It was obviously intended to prevent this danger through the dispossession of the unreliable Afghans in Puri. But as a strong-minded Hindu, Rājput Mānsingh even might have planned to re-establish the Jagannātha cult himself after the final annexation of Orissa to the Mughal empire.

But if Mānsingh ever had intended to renew the cult at Puri, his plans were thwarted by several local pretenders to the Gajapati throne who rushed forward immediately after Puri was freed from the Afghans. Only two months after Mānsingh had signed the treaty, a cousin or brother of the last Gajapati king advanced from his southern homeland in Rajmahendry up to Athagarh in the Ganjam district. He reached there around the 20th of October 1590 and fought some skirmishes under the protection of Golkonda army which brought him right up to the Chilka lake where he occupied some locally important strategic places. In the same inscription which praised the above mentioned deeds of the Golkonda general in the Ganjam District he proudly presented himself as the "Gajapati Nṛsiṃha Deva (and) divine incarnation" (*divya avatāra*). At the sight of the still unconquered sacred centre of his ancestral kingdom further to the north and in order to

---

[11] Athgarh inscription of the year 1590; see S.N. Rajaguru, Three Inscriptions of the Rulers of the Chalukya Family of Orissa, in: *OHRJ*, 6 (1957) 11-48.

legitimize his claim to the throne he announced that "as king of the Utkal empire (*sāmrājya*) he protects the Gajapati throne!"[12] But he seems to have never reached the promised land Utkal because another pretender to the Gajapati throne meanwhile had already firmly established himself near Puri, i.e. Rāmacandra Deva of Khurda.

The early history of Rāmacandra is very uncertain.[13] But apparently he had been able to renew the Jagannātha images in his own small capital Khurda in about 1587. There he kept them till he got a chance to bring them to Puri which at that time was still occupied by the Afghans. This chance was to come quite soon with Mānsingh's treaty with the Afghans, which declared Puri crown land of the Mughals. Apparently Rāmacandra lost no time and renewed the Jagannātha cult at Puri in a grand ceremony. During this ceremony he was highly honoured by the priests of Puri who recognized him as the New Gajapati (*abhinava gajapati*) of Orissa.[14]

The Afghans stuck to the treaty only for one year. Already in 1591 "the wicked Afghans laid hold of the temple of the worship of Jagannātha"[15] as Abū l'Fazl wrote in his *Akbar-nāma*. The renewal of the Jagannātha cult by Rāmacandra must have enraged them deeply. Mānsingh who according to Abū l'Fazl meanwhile "repented of the peace he had made, resolved to conquer the country".[16]

In a large-scale and well-organized campaign he invaded Orissa in 1592 and defeated the Afghans in several battles. After conquering Cuttack, Mānsingh surprisingly decided to make a pilgrimage to Jagannātha in Puri hoping "that he would be nearer to Rājah Rām Cand, and that when an opportunity occurred he could lay

---

[12] ibid., line 11.

[13] For a detailed study of the renewal of the Jagannātha cult see H. Kulke, *Jagannātha-Kult und Gajapati-Königtum. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte religiöser Legitimation indischer Herrscher*, Wiesbaden 1979, pp. 80-133.

[14] *Mādaḷā Pāñji*, p. 63.

[15] *Akbarnāma*, III, p. 934.

[16] ibid.

hold of him".[17] But Rāmacandra appears to have presaged what Mānsingh was up to and entrenched himself in his fort at Khurda. On his refusal to pay his respect to Mānsingh a strong Mughal army besieged Khurda. Then something unexpected happened. Abūl'Fazl reports in his Akbarnāma:

> On hearing of this His Majesty (Akbar) - who appreciates dignities - became angry, and issued censures. The Rājah (Mānsingh) recalled his troops, and apologized. Rām Cand, on seeing the graciousness of His Majesty, took the thought of paying his respect .... He visited the Rājah and was treated with much respect.[18]

What could have been the reasons of Akbar's rather strange behaviour to censure his favourite Hindu general for the sake of a local Hindu rājā in Orissa? Since 1565, when Akbar had sent an ambassador to Orissa in order to win over the last Gajapati Mukunda Deva as an ally against the Afghans in Bengal, Akbar knew about the Gajapatis and their strong connection with the Jagannātha cult. In 1592/93 Akbar "who appreciates dignities" apparently recognized Rāmacandra as the legitimate successor of his former ally Mukunda Deva. Rāmacandra was certainly the best choice of Akbar for a strong ally against the Afghans in Orissa and the Sultanate of Golkonda. Rāmacandra had proved himself an able military leader and was highly respected by the Oriyas for his renewal of their "national" cult. Akbar therefore acknowledged "Rāja Rām Chandra [as] zamīndār of Orissa" and appointed him as a Manṣabdār with the rank "Commander of 500".[19]

Mānsingh, on the other hand, being himself an ambitious Hindu rājā initially must have regarded Rāmacandra as a rival for his own position in Orissa, especially because Rāmacandra had renewed the most famous cult of eastern India, an act which Mānsingh

---

17 *Akbarnāma*, III, p. 941.

18 *Akbarnāma*, III, p. 967 f.

19 *A'īn-i Akbarī*, translated by H. Blochmann, Calcutta 1873, vol. I, p. 548.

might have planned to perform himself.[20] But after Mānsingh had learnt the intention of his imperial master he executed his plansn loyally. In an overall political reorganization of Orissa he divided it into a coastal area, which - as *Mughalbandi* - came under direct Mughal rule, and a hilly tract in which the Garhjat rājās were acknowledged as zamīndārs, the most powerful among them being the Rājās of Mayurbhanj and Keonjhar. Rāmaçandra was confirmed in his own zamindārī. Furthermore, thirty-one small zamindārīs of central and south Orissa were assigned to Khurda. Rāmacandra was thus not only recognized as a zamindār in his own territory of about 1300 sq. miles, he became through the many zamīndāris which were assigned to him, the rājā of a strong buffer state of about 13.000 sq. miles between the Mughalbandi, the semi-autonomous hill tracts and the territory of the Golkonda Sultanate.

During the late 16th century, Puri was thus an important factor in the power struggle between three Muslim powers, i.e. the Afghans of Bengal, the Sultanate of Golkonda and the Mughals. Akbar's final victory over the Afghans allowed Rāmacandra of Khurda to renew the Jagannātha cult in Puri and to establish himself as the leading rājā of central Orissa. Akbar thus played a considerably important role in the renewal of the Jagannātha cult and was able to win a loyal ally and to create a strong local buffer state against the Sultanate of Golkonda.

IV

But these prerequisites of the rise of Khurda under Akbar changed rapidly under Akbar's first and third successors, i.e. Jahāngīr and Aurangzeb. Usually this change is ascribed to the alteration of the religious policy of the Mughal emperors since Akbar's death in 1605. In the case of Orissa and specifically Khurda two points are of greater importance. In 1607 A.D. Orissa became a separate sūbahdārī-province with Cuttack as its capital. Since then, it was only a question of time till a Muslim governor at Cuttack would try to subdue the neighbouring Khurda territory

---

[20] The dynastic chronicle of Mānsingh claims that he erected a temple for Jagannātha in Puri (R.N. Prasad, *Raja, Mānsingh of Amber*, Calcutta 1966, p. 87) and the *Mādaḷā Pāñji* (p. 63) credits the construction of the Mukti Maṇḍapa to his wife.

whose rājās claimed to be subject to the emperor only and to be the *sacred* and *secret* ruler of Orissa. Another reason for the change of the policy towards Khurda was the plan of Jahāngīr to expand the imperial territory beyond Orissa and to annex the southern kingdom of Rajmahendri, which had come under the rule of Golkonda. Due to this plan Khurda automatically lost its important strategic function as a buffer state between the Mughal empire and the Golkonda Sultanate.

Only a few years after Akbar's death Khurda and Puri experienced the dire consequences of this change of imperial policy. Under Hāshim Khān, the first Mughal Governor of Orissa, Keśo Dās, a Hindu Rājput jagīrdār in Orissa, took full advantage of the new policy. With a group of soldiers disguised as pilgrims he attacked Puri by surprise during the car festival, burnt the cars, plundered the temple treasure and entrenched himself in the Jagannātha temple when Puruṣottama Deva, the new Rājā of Khurda, advanced with his army. But when reinforcement was sent by the Muslim Governor from Cuttack, Puruṣottama had to give up the siege of the temple and was forced to consent in an expensive and humiliating treaty.[21] In 1611 the new Hindu Governor of Orissa, Rājā Kalyāna Singh, again attacked Khurda. The priests of Puri took the Jagannātha image on an island in the Chilka lake where it remained for several years. This must have meant a tremendous loss for the priests of Puri who depended mainly on the gifts of the pilgrims, most of whom stayed away from Puri during the absence of Jagannātha.

However, these two attacks on Puri and Khurda had not yet set up completely the power structure in central Orissa. This happened only under Makaram Khān, the third Governor, who struck a decisive blow at the semi-autonomous status of the Khurda Rājās. He not only attacked, but also occupied Khurda for the first time. Jahāngīr proudly noticed in his autobiography: "Between the province Orissa and Golconda there were two zamindars, one the Raja of Khurda and the second the Raja of Rajmahendra. *The province of Khurda has come into the possession of the servants of the*

---

[21] A detailed description is given by Mīrzā Nathan in his *Bahāristān - i - Ghaybī*, vol. I, p. 35-38, transl. by M.J. Borah, Gauhati 1936.

court. After this it is the turn of the country of Rajmahendra."[22] Rājā Puruṣottama of Khurda fled into a fortress in the inaccessible mountainous south of his kingdom and Jagannātha was taken to a village at the border of Banpur.[23]

Within less than three decades after the great deed of Rāmacandra, namely the renewal of the Jagannātha cult, both the "Lord of the World" and the "Lord of Elephants" had thus to succumb to the superior power of the Muslim sūbahdārs in Cuttack. The repeated raids against Puri and Khurda under Jahāngīr have been compared with the destruction of the cult by the Afghans in 1568 A.D. But an analysis of the available sources reveals that the targets of these attacks under Jahāngīr - carried out after all by two *Hindu* Rājputs and only one *Muslim* officer - were the famous *temple treasure* of Jagannātha and the *semi-autonomous* status of Khurda. Apparently under Jahāngīr it was not the aim to destroy the Jagannātha cult itself. But whenever the Rājā of Khurda was attacked, he himself ordered the removal of the images from Puri which were his most valuable possession and the source of the legitimacy of his kingship.

After these three devastating attacks a more peaceful time began. In 1623 A.D., during his revolt against his imperial father, prince Shāhjahān passed through Orissa. The temple chronicle of Puri relates that Narasiṃha, the new Rājā of Khurda, paid homage to him whereupon a Rājput officer of Shāhjahān's troop reinstalled together with Narasiṃha the images of Jagannātha on this *ratnasiṃhāsana* in Puri.[24]

The following 30 years under Shāhjahān (1628-1657) were the most peaceful of the whole Khurda period. Obviously all those who had an interest in the cult of Jagannātha had realized that the long absence of Jagannātha's image from Puri and the non-arrival of the pilgrims ultimately hurt everybody economically, i.e. the priests, the pilgrim guides, and the Rājā of Khurda who, moreover, lost the

---

[22] *Tūzuk-i-Jahāngīrī*, vol. I, P. 433, transl. by A. Rogers, ed. by H. Beveridge, 2nd ed., Delhi 1968 (my emphasis).

[23] *Mādaḷā Pāñji*, p. 66.

[24] *Mādaḷā Pāñji*, p. 67.

control over Puri while he was living in a mountain fortress far-off. Although we have no evidence that the pilgrim tax, which had been abolished under Akbar, was reintroduced in Orissa by Shāhjahān, it is nevertheless very likely that the lack of pilgrims had caused a great financial loss for the sūbahdār at Cuttack, too. It seems quite likely, therefore, that during this period a tacit agreement was reached between the Rājā of Khurda and the Mughal Sūbahdār at Cuttack. Bruton, one of the early British travellers in India, reported in 1633 A.D. that during the car festival "one of the moguls sitting ... in the chariot, upon a convenient place, with a canopy to keep the sun from injuring him".[25] It was obviously the intention of the Sūbahdār to control this most important yearly gathering of pilgrims in Puri rather than to obstruct it. Bruton's detailed description of the Jagannātha cult gives a vivid picture of an undisturbed cult at Puri.

During these years Rājā Narasiṃha of Khurda, through a number of decisive measures and reforms, apparently tried to compensate the loss of the semi-autonomous status of his dynasty through a strong reinforcement of his influence in Puri. Most important for the future relationship between the Rājās of Khurda and the Jagannātha cult was the construction of a palace of the Khurda Rājās in Puri to the south of the Jagannātha temple. This was the first step of a development during which the Rājās of Khurda became more and more "Rājās of Puri". The construction of the palace in Puri was followed by a rapid increase of the influence of the Rājās on the temple, its cult and economy. Since Narasiṃha a complicated system of socio-economic and ritual temple-palace relations emerged in Puri, through which the palace and the temple rituals became more and more synchronized.[26]

But Narasiṃha's temple reforms in Puri and even Bhubaneswar caused a strong opposition, particularly among temple priests. In 1647 in an open revolt in which a priest and a Mughal officer were

---

[25] Quoted by P. Acharya, Bruton's Account of Cuttack and Puri, in: *OHRJ,* 10, 3 (1961) 25-50(46).

[26] Nityananda Patnaik published several articles on these palace - temple relations in Puri; see also his *Cultural Tradition in Puri*, Simla 1977.

involved, Narasiṃha was killed in his palace.[27] Mughal soldiers took advantage of the following disorder and looted the palace and the temple treasures. But they did not disturb the Jagannātha cult nor is anything known about the removal of Jagannātha to the south of Orissa. These facts make it highly probable that Narasiṃha was murdered by a conspiracy of the priests of Puri and Mughal officers from Cuttack, who out of vested interests both mistrusted the growing influence of the Khurda king in the temple city of Puri and its immediate hinterland.

Despite this temporary setback for the Khurda dynasty, their position in the Hindu society of Orissa was well-established by the middle of the 17th century. The devotion of the Oriyas to their Gajapatis is known from the report of Khān-i-Daurān. This Mughal officer had just reconquered Orissa for Aurangzeb in 1661, after the rājās and zamindārs of Orissa had regained their independence for about three years during the war of succession at the Mughal court. During his campaign against Khurda, Khān-i-Daurān called the young Rājā Mukunda Deva "the leading zamindar of this country, whose orders are obeyed by the other zamindars" and added that "all the other zamindars of the country worship (him) like a god and disobedience of whose orders they regard as a great sin".[28] This favourable report is most interesting because it was written by a *Muslim* officer during his campaign against Khurda. According to this source, Muslim authorities, too, appear to have realized, if not recognized, the sacred position of the Khurda Rājās in the Hindu society of Orissa. Furthermore, it is of particular interest that the rather politically weak Khurda Rājās had been able to regain exactly the same rituo-political position as the former imperial Gajapatis. In the same way as these Gajapatis had denounced any opposition against their orders as an attack (*droha*) against Jagannātha, disobedience against the orders of the Khurda Rājās was regarded "as a great sin". Moreover, it is again noteworthy that despite the conquest of Khurda, no disturbance of the Jagannātha cult is reported in any contemporary

---

27 *Mādaḷā Pāñji*, p. 67.

28 *Muruqat-i-Hassan*, quoted by J.N. Sarkar, The History of Orissa in the Seventeenth Century, Reconstructed from Persian Sources, in: *JBORS*, II (1916) 240.

source, nor do we hear anything about the flight of priests from Puri.

Even Aurangzeb's policy against Hindu institutions was not able to destroy completely this tacit collaboration between the Rājā of Khurda, the Sūbahdārs in Cuttack and the priests of Puri. Even after the notorious imperial decree of the year 1669, which explicitely ordered the destruction of all recently built Hindu temples and the prevention of the building of new temples, it took nearly twenty years till the destruction of Hindu temples was reported in Orissa. But nothing is known about any destruction in Puri, on the contrary, the annals of Puri report about several new minor temple constructions in Puri itself during these years.[29] A Sūbahdār is said to have set out for Puri in order to desecrate the Jagannātha temple, but according to the Mādalā Pāñji he was forced back by a lightning flash near Pipli. His alleged campaign against Puri, therefore, was more likely a successful extortion of money from the Rājā of Khurda and the priests of Puri for his toleration of the cult at Puri.

This "economical toleration" must have been the reason why Aurangzeb in 1692 by a new decree ordered explicitly the destruction of the Jagannātha temple. But the Rājā of Khurda met the Sūbahdār at Cuttack and apparently it was agreed upon to arrange a pretended destruction under their joint supervision. After some minor demolitions - most likely - a faked image of Jagannātha was sent to Aurangzeb at Bijapur and the main gate of the temple was closed.[30] But the daily rituals of the cult were continued by priests who entered the temple through a secret side door in the southern temple wall.[31] This situation however could not be concealed from Aurangzeb for a long time. He recalled the Sūbahdār and sent a high officer as an examiner to Puri. But according to an Oriya chronicle, the Rājā of Khurda accomplished the masterpiece to bribe even him - or as the chronicle paraphrazed it "to win him as

---

[29] *Mādaḷā Pāñji*, p. 69 f.

[30] *Tabsirat-ul Nazirin*, quoted by R.L. Mitra, *The Antiquities of Orissa*, vol. II, p. 112, Calcutta 1875. *Mādaḷā Pāñji*, p. 70 and *Cakoḍā Pothi*, p. 20.

[31] *Cakoḍā Pothi*, p. 20.

a friend" - with a gift of 30.000 rupees. Till the death of Aurangzeb in 1707 A.D. the temple of Jagannātha remained officially closed. But "unofficially" the cult was allowed to continue to the extent of permitting several rājās to visit the temple and to perform their traditional royal rituals.[32] A few months after Aurangzeb's death the doors of the temple were forcibly opened by a minister of Khurda and by the chiefs of the 18 Gaḍajāta states and the cult was renewed in its previous greatness. It is obvious that this total renewal of the cult could take place only with the toleration of the Muslim Sūbahdār in Cuttack.

V

The tacit understanding between the Rājās of Khurda and the Muslim Governors at Cuttack to allow the Rājā to control the Jagannātha temple for their common benefit was given up only under the Nawābs of Bengal who became the rulers of eastern India a few decades after the death of Aurangzeb in 1707. During the decline of the Mughal empire, Orissa and, indirectly, Puri again became a bone of contention between the successor states, Hyderabad, Bengal and, later, the Marathas. Soon after 1724 when Nizām-ul-mulk had gained his *de facto* independence as the new ruler of the Dekkan, his troops conquered south Orissa up to the Chilka lake which till then had been part of the Orissa sūbah. Taqi Khān who was at that time the Sūbahdār at Cuttack apparently tried to compensate for this loss of territory through a more direct control of Khurda and Puri. During this struggle, Taqi Khān defeated the Rājā of Khurda, Rāmacandra II, and imprisoned him. After a love affair with a Muslim princess at Cuttack and an alleged conversion to Islam, Rāmacandra was reinstalled in Khurda by the Muslim Governor, who wished to use him as a tool in his hands in order to annex Khurda finally to his Sūbahdārī. But once Rāmacandra was back to Khurda he was able to regain the confidence of the priests of Puri and to persuade them to follow

---

[32] In the years 1696 and 1701 the Rājās of Ranpur and Patia had an official *darśana* of Jagannātha during which they received the customary honours (*Jagannātha Sthalavṛttāntam*, p. 142 and 146; Government Oriental Manuscript Library, Madras, Folio D.No. 2612 - R.No. 1220).

him together with the Jagannātha image to a mountain fortress beyond the borders of south Orissa. During the following years Rāmacandra returned only once in 1732 during the car festival with the image of the "Lord of the World" to Puri. But he retreated again to his hide-out in the south after the end of this festival, although the Muslim Governor had not interfered in the affairs in Puri. When in 1735 Murshid Quli Khān was appointed Governor of Orissa he was not willing to tolerate this cat-and-mouse game any longer. He sent a small troop to the south and, with the consent of the Governor of the Ganjam District (which belonged to Hyderabad), he forcibly brought back the image of Jagannātha and renewed the cult at Puri. In order to prevent any further disturbance of the pilgrimage economy he deposed the Rājā of Khurda and appointed Padmanābha of Patia as the new Gajapati.[33]

The rather strange event that a *Hindu* cult of a great temple city was renewed by a *Muslim* officer has usually been explained as an act of tolerance. But fortunately we possess the account of a Bengal chronicle of the year 1786/87, which clearly explains the reasons of this tolerance: "During the commotion in Muhammad Taqī Khān's time, the Rājah of Parsutam [Puri] had removed Jagannath, the Hindu God, from the limits of the ṣūbah of Odisah (Orissa), and had guarded it on the summit of a hill across the Chilka lake. In consequence of the removal of the idol, there was a falling-off to the tune of nine lakhs of rupies in the Imperial revenue, accruing from pilgrims".[34] It is obvious from this quotation that the Governor had ordered the renewal of the Jagannātha cult in Puri in order to stop the loss of pilgrim tax which had occcured during the years of Jagannātha's absence from Puri. "The religious warfare was at last set at rest by the institution of the tax on pilgrims", as rightly remarked by Stirling in 1822.[35]

---

[33] *Mādaḷā Pāñji*, p. 77.

[34] *Riyāzu-s-Salāṭīn*, p. 302 f, transl. by Maulavi Abdus Salam, Calcutta 1902-1904.

[35] Quoted in N.K. Sahu (ed.), *A History of Orissa by W.W. Hunter, A. Stirling, J. Beames, N.K. Sahu*, Calcutta 1956, vol. II, p. 257.

Although a few years later Rāmacandra's son Divyasimha was able to regain his ancestral throne under great financial concessions to the Muslim Governor, the days of the Khurda dynasty were numbered, when the Marathas conquered Orissa in 1751. Whereas the *Muslim* Governors during the last one and a half centuries necessarily had to leave at least the control of the temple rituals to a *Hindu* Rājā, the Marathas as the new *Hindu* rulers of Orissa were most suspicious against the position of the Rājās of Khurda as the sacred and - at least in the eyes of the Oriyas - the secret rulers of Orissa. Therefore at the first opportunity, when the Khurda Rājās were unable to repay a debt of one lakh of rupees, the Marathas took over the administration of the Jagannātha temple and brought under their control all those feudatory states which had come under Khurda since Akbar.[36] Thus only 10 years after the Marathas had begun to rule Orissa, Khurda was reduced to a small feudatory state.

VI

The cooperation between the Rājās of Khurda and the Mughal Sūbahdārs at Cuttack for the sake of the administration of the Jagannātha temple was in fact no exception. From a recent publication on the *History of Sringeri* we come to know that even the famous maṭha at Sringeri and its venerated Jagadgurus were well protected and even patronized by Muslim rulers of the South.[37] Thus for instance the Muslim General Ranadulla Khān of Bijapur sent his "salām to the holy feet of the illustrious *parama-haṃsa-parivrājakācārya saccidānandabhārati svāmi* of the Sringeri Maṭha", restored landed property to Sringeri and concluded his letter: "This may satisfy you and you may arrange to despatch letters every now and then as to how far you require help from us, and convey your blessings".[38] A similar treatment was given to Sringeri by Mughal

---

36 *Mādaḷā Pāñji*, p. 79.

37 A.K. Shastry, *A History of Śriṅgēri*, Dharwad, Karnatak University 1983, pp. 34-50.

38 Quoted from *Annual Report of the Mysore Archaeological Department, for the year 1934*, Bangalore 1936, p. 131 f.

officers and officers of the Nizāms of Hyderabad. Particularly cordial seem to have been the relations between Sringeri and Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan. "Hyder received śrīmukha, prasāda and clothes from (the Jagadguru) Śrī Abhinava Satchidānanda Bhāratī and in his reply to this, besides paying his homage, he sent clothes to (the Goddess) Śrī Śāradāmbā and to His Holiness. He assured His Holiness that he would preserve all the privileges that the Maṭha was entitled to and requested him to bless him".[39]

The Jagannātha temple of Purī and the Sringeri maṭha are thus excellent examples to show to what extent Muslim rulers were willing to cooperate with Hindu institutions in order to rule the country. Hindu institutions, therefore, not only just continued to exist under Muslim rule. On the contrary, many of them appear to have had a special relationship with Muslim rulers. Therefore they often remained important institutions of economic and political significance and continued to play a significant role in the development of their respective regions also under Muslim rule.

---

[39] A.K. Shastry, *A History of Śriṅgēri*, Dharwad 1982, p. 45.

KṢETRA AND KṢATRA
The Cult of Jagannātha of Puri and the "Royal Letters" (*chāmu ciṭāu*) of the Rājās of Khurda[1]

One of the most significant distinctions between the spiritual principles of early Hindu kingship and its later, medieval developments is an inherent change from its associations with *brahman* to the concept of *kṣetra*. Whereas the early kingship ideology was founded on the symbiotic relation between *kṣatra* and *brahman*,[2] the *kṣatra* of medieval Hindu kingship became embedded spiritually in a network of relations with holy places (*kṣetra*) of divine manifestations, many of which developed into places of pilgrimage of regional and even all-India significance. Accordingly the importance of the Vedic *yajña* sacrifice diminished in comparison with the grand *pūjā* ceremonies of the great deities of the respective *kṣetras*[3] and the rājās changed from royal sacrificers (*yajamāna*) to earthly deputies (*rāuta*) or servitors (*sevaka*) of their respective "state deities". And, finally, the Brahmins had to share their earlier spiritual monopoly at the courts with sectarian leaders at the *kṣetras*. This is not the place to discuss in detail the question as to whether the new medieval kingship ideology reflected the spatial dimension which emanated from the holy *kṣetra* and their deities or whether their sacred sphere grew simultaneously with the process of early medieval state formation. However, it appears that the medieval concepts of *kṣatra* and the *kṣetra* evolved from the same cultural process of "universalization"

---

[1] The author acknowledges gratefully the financial support of the German Research Council, Bonn, for the project "Sources of Orissan Studies" (1982-1985).

[2] L. Dumont, The Concept of Kingship in Ancient India, in: idem, *Religion, Politics and History in India*. The Hague 1970, 62-88. See also J.C. Heesterman, *The Ancient Indian Royal Consecration. The Rājasūya described according to the Yajus texts and annotated.* The Hague 1957.

[3] N.B. Dirks, Political Authority and Structural Change in Early South Indian History, in: *IESHR*, 13 (1976) 125 ff.

which transformed the many local "little worlds" of *kṣatra* and *kṣetra* into the regional cultures of medieval India. The results of this development became evident towards the end of the first and the beginnings of the second millennium A.D. when regional state formation and the development of great sacred places slowly began to intertwine, an evolution which culminated in the development of the great temple cities of India as the major foci of royal patronage. Puri and its Jagannātha cult is one of the most illustrative examples of this close relation between *kṣetra* and *kṣatra* which is as characteristic of medieval Hindu India as the *brahman-kṣatra* relation was for early India.

Throughout its history, *Śrīkṣetra*, the holy city of Puri, was an object of political interest and power (*kṣatra*). As has been shown elsewhere,[4] the very foundation of the monumental Vaiṣṇava temple of Jagannātha by the Śaiva King Coḍagaṅga in c. 1135 A.D. was highly motivated by the political interest to honour the religious feelings of the conquered people of central Orissa and, at the same time, to match the imperial Cōḷas against whom Coḍagaṅga had fought a sanguinary but futile war. Thus even the height of the *baḍa deula* of Puri tallies more or less exactly with the Rājarājeśvara temple, the state temple of the Cōḷas at Tanjore. The ritual dedication of the whole empire of Orissa to Lord Puruṣottama Jagannātha in A.D. 1230 by King Anaṅgabhīma III, who was a strong devotee of the "Lord of the World", increased the royal interest and influence in Śrīkṣetra. The symbiotic relationship between the royal *kṣatra* and the *kṣetra* of Puri culminated in the 15th century under the Gajapati kings when King Kapilendra, after his successful *coup d'etat*, declared himself the "First Servitor" (*ādisebaka*) of Lord Jagannātha. In a series of inscriptions he denounced any opposition against his own rule as treason (*droha*) against Lord Jagannātha. His son, King Puruṣottama, introduced the royal service of ritual cleaning (*cherā pahaṃrā*) of the three large chariots (*ratha*) of the Jagannātha trinity which still forms the most important ritual privilege of the present Rājās of Puri.

---

[4] H. Kulke, "Early Royal Patronage of the Jagannātha Cult", in: *CJ*, pp. 139-155.

Even the destruction of the Gajapati kingdom and the wooden images of the Jagannātha trinity by Muslim armies in 1568 A.D. did not end the relationship between the *kṣatra* and the *kṣetra* of Puri. During the subsequent struggle between the Afghans of Bengal, the Mughals and the leading Hindu dynasty of Orissa, the control of Puri remained a decisive factor of political authority in Orissa. This was particularly realized by Akbar who allowed Rāmacandra, a local zamindār of Khurda near Puri, to gain control of the Jagannātha cult in order to strengthen the position of the Mughal empire against the Golconda Sultanate which was trying to conquer Orissa from the south. The rise of Rāmacandra, the consecration of new images of the Jagannātha trinity, first in his capital Khurda and then in Puri, shows to what extent state temples of former imperial dynasties and their temple cities had become focal points of the reestablishment of local successor states, a phenomenon well-known throughout India, particularly during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

In Orissa these centuries witnessed a protracted struggle for the control of Puri between the Rājās of Khurda and the Muslim Sūbahdārs of Cuttack. The Rājās of Khurda fought for their autonomy and regarded their control of Puri and their ritual privileges in the Jagannātha cult as the main pledge of their dominant position among the many "little rājās" of Orissa. The Sūbahdārs of Cuttack fought for the annexation of Khurda and for the economic control of the pilgrimage centre at Puri. The bipartite struggle for status and power in Orissa between the Rājās of Khurda and the Sūbahdārs of Cuttack was thus in fact a triangular struggle focussing on Puri.

In the course of these struggles, Puri became the stage for dramatic and sometimes even theatre-like events. For instance in 1609, during the car festival, Keśo Dās Māru, a Hindu General in the service of the Sūbahdār, entered Puri with a large group of disguised soldiers under the pretext of pilgrimage and occupied the Jagannātha temple with the intention of plundering the temple treasure. A Persian chronicle[5] reports that the Rājā of Khurda

---

[5] *Bahāristān -i- Ghaybī: A History of the Mughal Wars in Assam, Cooch Behar, Bengal, Bihar and Orissa during the Reigns of Jahāngīr and Shāhjahān*, by Mīrzā Nathan. Transl. by M.J. Borah, Gauhati 1936, vol. I, p. 35 ff.

tried to recapture the temple with the help of "manned" *rathas* which, however, were set on fire by Keśo Dās' soldiers by incendiary torches. The Rājā of Khurda had to agree to an armistice, to pay a large amount of money, and to offer one of his daughters to Keśo Dās who, finally, took away also the famous royal elephant. In 1692 Aurangzeb ordered the destruction of the Jagannātha temple, but the Sūbahdār, who was obviously more interested in his lucrative relations with the temple city than in destroying it, allowed a mock destruction and forwarded a faked image of Jagannātha to the imperial court. A few months later, the Rājā of Khurda succeeded in bribing even an inspector who was sent by the suspicious Aurangzeb with the explicit order to examine the situation at Puri with 30.000 Rupees.[6]

However, during the 18th century several new political factors weakened Khurda's position considerably. The many "little kingdoms", Khurda's feudatory states in Orissa, strove successfully for greater autonomy. Even more dangerous was the more direct rule of the powerful Nawābs of Bengal and their Sūbahdārs in Orissa during the thirties and forties of the 18th century, after the downfall of the rather far-off imperial Mughal administration. But the final blow to Khurda's leading position among the Rājās of Orissa was soon struck by a Hindu dynasty when the Marathas of Nagpur conquered Orissa in 1751 after a protracted war with Alivardi Khān, the Nawāb of Bengal. Already during an early incursion into central Orissa an officer of the Maratha army sent a letter to the priests of Puri: "Serve the Great Lord [Jagannātha] like a debtor [serves the creditor] without any fear. As long as we are here, the Maratha soldiers will not cross the boundary of Orissa [towards Puri]. Convey everybody in the sacred place (*kṣetra*) this assurance".[7] But already in about 1760 the Marathas had brought under their control Khurda's feudatory states and even began to take over the direct administration of the Jagannātha temple, thus

[6] *Cakoḍā Pothi o Cakoḍā Basāṇa ba Cayinī Cakoḍā*, ed. by S. Pattanaik, Cuttack 1959, p. 20.

[7] Letter No. MP, 2, 8, 2R (according to the classification system of the Orissa Research Project). The letter is dated 16.3.1745.

reducing Khurda to a local zamindārī. In 1766 T. Motte reported in his *Narrative of a Journey to the Diamond Mines at Sambalpur* that

> when Ragoojee [Bhonsle of Nagpur] entered Orissa he found these parts divided into small zamindaries dependent on the Rajah of Pooree at whose capital is the famous temple of Jaggernaut, near Chilka lake. This prince was regarded by his subjects in a religious light also, and appeared formidable to the Mahrathas, who, apprehensive, lest he might seize a favorable opportunity to cut off the communication between Nagpur and Cuttack, resolved to reduce his power by dividing it. He made the petty Zamindaries independent of him, and formed chuklas of Dinkahol, Bonkey, Narsingpoor, Togorea, Tolchair, Chunda Para, Dispulla, Hindole, Ungool, and Boad."[8]

During these dangerous decades before the final conquest of Orissa by the Marathas, the Rājās of Khurda tried desperately to strengthen their increasingly weakened position through ritual means, making use of Orissa's state deity and their own position in this cult. Whereas the former powerful "imperial" Gajapati kings had, in a way, monopolized this cult and threatened disloyal chiefs with the wrath of Lord Jagannātha, the Khurda Rājās, having lost the actual power to monopolize the cult, tried to gain loyalty and support of their feudatory rājās by sharing their own position in the Jagannātha cult with them. Rājās and chiefs who came for a "view" (*darśana*) of Lord Jagannātha were granted special privileges during their visit of the temple. These special privileges of the visitors were announced by the Khurda Rājā to the superintendent (*parīkṣa*) of the Jagannātha temple by "royal letters" (*chāmu ciṭāu*).[9] The privileges granted to distinguished visitors pertained to royal

---

[8] T. Motte, A Narrative of a Journey to the Diamond Mines at Sumbhalpoor, repr. in: *OHRJ*, I, 3 (1953) App., p. 28. The report is dated in the year 1766.

[9] For a first study of these royal letters see *CJ*, p. 338-342 and H. Kulke, *Jagannātha-Kult und Gajapati-Königtum. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte religiöser Legitimation hinduistischer Herrscher*, Wiesbaden 1979, p. 197-204. - Together with Prof. G.N. Dash, Berhampur, the author prepared an edition of the *chāmu ciṭāu* which the former Orissa Research Project purchased in 1970 from the Deula Karana of Puri and which had been handed over to the Orissa State Museum at Bhubaneswar in 1974 (see below chapter 9). The author gratefully acknowledges the help he received in these studies from the late Shri Kedarnath Mahapatra, Dr. Satyanarayan Rajaguru, Dr. Shishir Kumar Panda and by Dr. H.C. Das , Superintendent, Orissa State Museum.

paraphernalia which some visitors were permitted to take to the temple, furthermore to certain rituals which some visitors were allowed to perform in front of Jagannātha, and to the special honour of visiting the temple together with family members after it had been completely vacated (*śodha*) by other pilgrims and priests.

Royal or princely visitors usually had to leave their palanquin and their royal insignia at the main entrance of the temple, the eastern *siṃhadvāra*. It was a special privilege of certain rājās to enter the first temple compound with royal insignia up to second gate and to lay aside their paraphernalia only at that place. The most respected service to the Lord was the *cāmara* service, that is, the waving of a fan made from the tail of a yak. According to their respective status, the visitors had to perform the service with a cāmara with a golden or silver handle or with a handle wrapped in a cotton cloth. Furthermore, the exact place in the sanctum sanctorum, where this service had to be performed, was an indicator of the status of the visitor. The higher his status, the nearer to Jagannātha was he allowed to stay.

Some special privileges of serving the Lord were granted hereditarily to certain feudatory chiefs of central Orissa. These were for instance the *pharaka-sebā*, the body guard service, a special privilege granted to the Rājās of Banpur. Another service granted to feudatory rājās of Orissa was the *churi-kaṇḍa-sebā*, the sword and dagger service of the Lord, which was the special privilege of the Rājās of Baramba and Ranpur. Four other feudatory states had the privilege of providing iron (Dhenkanal, Talcher), timber (Ghumsur and, later, Daspalla) for the construction of the rathas, and *simulī* ropes (Ranpur and Dhenkanal) which were required for the covering fabric of the cars and for dragging them by the pilgrims. The highest privilege granted to feudatory rājās was the appointment as "administrator" (*parīkṣa*)[10] of the Jagannātha Temple at Puri (Athgarh and Banki). A single case (Nayagarh) is known where a feudatory rājā even was appointed "Great Administrator" (*baḍa parīkṣa*) of the temple.

---

10 *parichha* in modern Oriya.

These services to Lord Jagannātha were always rewarded according to the royal order (*ājñā*) with one or several pieces of cloth from the temple store. Here again we find subtle and status-oriented differences in regard to the quality and the religious significance of these gifts. Distinguished visitors received valuable silk saris or stoles whereas other visitors had to be contented with pieces of cotton. Some visitors were honoured with a piece of cloth which had been worn by Jagannātha or which had been used as a temple flag. Few cases are known where a beautiful piece of silk, woven with verses of the Gītagovinda, was presented to distinguished visitors.

Royal visitors informed the Rājā of Khurda through their agents about their arrival at Puri and their intention to have a darśan of Lord Jagannātha. At his palace (*hamṣavallabha*), the Rājā of Khurda then gave an order (*ājñā*) to his Diwān or secretary to write a "royal letter" (*chāmu ciṭāu*) to the temple administrator (*deuḷa parīkṣa*), the temple scribe (*deuḷa karaṇa*) and "to all the servants" (*kārjimānaṅku*) of the Jagannātha Temple at Puri. These letters, some of which were signed by the Rājā's own hand writing (*śrī hasta*), were kept in the temple archives by the temple scribe (*deuḷa karaṇa*). These usually rather short letters begin with the year of reign (*aṅka*) of the Rājā of Khurda and with a form of the address of the temple officers at Puri. It then announces the arrival of the visitor and his special ritual rights and privileges during his visit of the temple. Sometimes donations are mentioned which the visitor intends to present to the temple. The letter usually ends with the list of gifts which the visitor will receive from the temple store.

One example of such a *chāṃu ciṭau* may suffice for our purpose. It reports the visit of the Rājā of Badakhemundi from South Orissa in the year 1662 A.D. during the reign of Rājā Mukundadeva.

> For this purpose the duty of Paṭanāika (an officer of the Khurda Rājā) is stated. Let Śrī Jagannātha protect [you all. This is a] letter to Śrī Candana Mahāpātra on the 12th day of Meṣa.
> Rājā Nīlakaṇṭha Deva [of Badakhemundi] has gone [to Puri] for darśan. We sent Paramānanda Paṭanāika along with him. He (Paramānanda) will stay [with him] and make him perform the darśan. The palanquin, the royal umbrella (*cati*), trumpet (*kāhālī*), a fan (*cāmara*) made of peacock feathers (*maira jhula*), and the

sword and dagger [of the Rājā] will be kept in a place near the Lion's Gate. He will be allowed to take his big fan (*tarāsa*) and other necessary articles [of prestige] with him. After being carried over the seven steps of the *baṭadvāra* of the Jaganmohana, all this will be kept near the Jaya Vijaya gate [inside the temple compound]. He will perform worship at the Jaya Vijaya gate. Entering [the sanctum sanctorum] he will have darśan. Then he will perform the golden *cāmara sebā* in the *aṇasara* pindi [maṇḍapa]. After this he will come through the inner southern gate and after having had darśan of the *parśa devatās*, he will go [out] through the lion's gate. Having a vermillion mark (*sindura*), he will have darśan. He is allowed to go with torches of leaves (*patra masāla*) up to the Jaya Vijaya gate of the Jagamohana.The order (*taḷapa*) [was executed] on the 19th day of Meṣa. It is reported by Paramānanda Paṭanāika that Nilakaṇṭha Deva, the Rājā of Badakhemundi, was offered a sari, that is, one piece of silk (*pāṭa*) *khaṇḍua* called *cauka nāika*.[11]

The former Orissa Research Project was able to purchase a portion of the temple records from the *deuḷa karaṇa* of Puri.[12] So far about 125 such royal letters, all of them written in Oriya on palm leaves, have been identified. Furthermore, the Jagannātha Sthalavṛttāntam, an unpublished Telugu manuscript of the former Mackenzie Collection in the Government Manuscript Library at Madras, contains about 35 Telugu translations of such royal letters.[13] The earliest dated letter belongs to the year 1654[14] and the latest to the year 1913. All of them are adressed to royal or princely families of altogether 50 places, ranging from Bundi in

[11] Letter No. MP, 4, 16, 4R.

[12] For more details of the temple records see below the article "The Chronicles and the Temple Records of the Mādaḷā Pāñji of Puri".

[13] *Jagannātha Sthalavṛttāntam*; Government Oriental Manuscript Library Madras, folios D.No. 2612-R.No. 1220; Dr. Satyanarayan Rajaguru prepared an edition and translation of this important text.

[14] In fact this earliest "letter" is only a short note about the visit of the Raja of Patia in Puri in the 10th aṅka of King Balabhadra. It mentions no privileges of the Patia Raja. (*Jagannātha Sthalavṛttāntam*, p. 99).

Rajasthan to Gualpada in Assam and Vijayanagara (Vizianagara) in northern Andhra Pradesh. As regards their space of time, we observe a very clear concentration in the mid-eighteenth century, and in regard to their spatial distribution their overwhelming number refers clearly to places in Orissa, mainly the feudatory states of Khurda in Central Orissa. Of these altogether 151 letters only 13 belong to the late period after 1803 when Orissa was conquered by the East India Company.

This article concentrates on the two dangerous decades of the history of the Khurda dynasty between 1731 and 1751. In 1731 Rāmacandra II was defeated and imprisoned by the Sūbahdār Taqī Khān who, later on, also occupied Khurda. During his imprisonment at Cuttack, Rāmacandra fell in love with a Muslim princess and apparently lost his caste. His sons therefore rebelled against him and freed Khurda from Muslim armies. But Taqī Khān reconquered Khurda and installed Rāmacandra again as Rājā of Khurda. But far from acting as a puppet of the Sūbahdār, Rāmacandra changed his mind very soon and, with the obvious support of priests of Puri, took the wooden images of Lord Jagannātha to a hide-out in the mountainous south of Orissa. Now Taqī Khān summonded Rāmacandra's eldest son from Daspalla and made him Rājā of Khurda. In the year 1733 the great Nabakalebara ceremony, the periodical renewal of the wooden images of Jagannātha, had to take place. This renewal, however, requires the *brahma*, the most sacred and secret portion of the old *mūrti*, which is "transplanted" during this ceremony into the new *mūrti*.[15] In his hide-out, cut-off from Khurda and Puri, his *kṣatra* and *kṣetra*, Rāmacandra appears to have come to an agreement with the Sūbahdār and his son and returned the *mūrti* with its *brahma* just in time before Nabakalebara took place. The Sūbahdār did not interfere in Puri as he seems to have been interested mainly in an undisturbed situation which allowed the pilgrims to visit Puri - and pay the pilgrim tax.

In this desperate situation, Rāmacandra tried to regain the support and loyalty of the feudatory rājās of Orissa. He did this through intensive diplomacy. He issued more than a dozen royal letters

---

[15] G.C. Tripathi, Navakalevara. The Unique Ceremony of the 'Birth' and the 'Death' of the 'Lord of the World', in: *CJ*, pp. 223-264.

(*chāmu ciṭāu*) to all important rājās of central Orissa, granting them and, in some cases, renewing special privileges in the Jagannātha cult during their visits to Puri, particularly during the approaching Nabakalebara festival. But immediately after the great festival, he again took the new images to the south, this time even beyond the borders of the Sūbahdārī of Orissa. The loyal feudatory Rājā of Athagarh in present-day Ganjam District gave shelter to the "Lord of the World" and to his earthly representative, had a temple constructed for Jagannātha at Marada and donated a few villages for its maintenance and the support of Rāmachandra and his small entourage.[16]

There they remained for more than two years till 1736 when the new Sūbahdār Murshid Quli Khān forcibly retrieved the images and had them reinstalled at Puri. The temple chronicles of Puri and a contemporary Persian chronicle of Bengal report about this strange event when a Hindu deity was reinstalled in its temple by a Muslim officer against the explicit will of the Hindu rājā but, perhaps, with the consent of the temple priests who must have suffered from the absence of their deity. We are informed by the Persian chronicle that "in consequence of the removal of the idol, there was a failing-off to the tune of nine lakhs of rupies to the Imperial court, accruing from the pilgrims".[17] In order to prevent any further disturbances by Rāmacandra, Murshid Quli Khān dethroned him in the same year and installed the Rājā of Patia of central Orissa on the throne of Khurda. Rāmacandra died in 1739 in exile at a feudatory court while the new Rājā ruled for about three years. But because of financial irregularities, the Patia Rājā, too, was dethroned and Rāmacandra's son Vīrakeśarī regained his ancestral throne after paying a large amount of money to the Sūbahdār.

In 1842 the Marathas of Nagpur began their war of plunder against Alivardi Khān, the Nawāb of Bengal, till he was forced to cede control over Orissa to the Marathas in 1751. The long

---

16 *Account of Ganzam*, Local Records, vol. IX, p. 372-458 (Government Oriental Manuscript Library, Madras) Transl. by S.N. Rajaguru, mimeogr., p. 65.

17 *Riyāzu-s-Salāṭīn: A History of Bengal*, by Ghulām Husain Salīm. Transl. by Maulavi Abdus Salam, Calcutta 1902-1904, p. 302 f.

sanguinary war between the Marathas and Alivardi's troops created an anarchy which increasingly threatened the position of Khurda among the many feudatory rājās of Orissa, as some of them tried to gain more autonomy. In this situation, Vīrakeśarī followed the example of his father and continued his *chāmu ciṭāu* "diplomacy" in order to retain the loyalty of the rājās of Orissa and to extend his influence even beyond the borders of Orissa. Most instructive is his "special treatment" of the Rājā of Athagarh where his father and Lord Jagannātha had taken shelter for more than two years. Elsewhere it has been shown to what an extent Rājā Vīrakeśarī was able to make use of his position in the Jagannātha cult for his own political ends and to re-establish at least his dominant ritual position among the "little rājās" of Orissa.

The number of *chāmu ciṭāus* and royal addressees which are now known, has nearly doubled since we began the study of these royal letters in the former Orissa Research Project. Meanwhile we have been able to trace altogether 70 royal letters of the time of Vīrakeśarī which were addressed to members of 28 princely or royal houses. Already these large numbers are astonishing. But even more impressive is the fact that out of these 70 letters 43 letters (61%) belong to the single decade between 1742 - 1751 during the Maratha war, whereas the other 27 letters (39%) are distributed over 34 years, the rest of his long reign from 1739 - 1791. Thus according to our present knowledge, Vīrakeśarī issued during the Maratha war on the average 4.3 *chāmu ciṭāus* per year to royal visitors as against 0.8 per year during the rest of his reign. This remarkable fact shows that Vīrakeśarī granted, or reconfirmed, five times more ritual privileges of kings and chiefs in the Jagannātha cult in a certain political situation than during other years of his reign. The letters of his father Rāmacandra depict an even more striking picture. Out of 23 letters known from his reign between 1727 and 1736, 22 letters belong to those five dramatic years when he fought for his survival after his temporary imprisonment in 1731 to his dethronement in 1736. Only a single letter is known from an earlier year (1727). If we add up all the letters which Rāmacandra and his son Vīrakeśarī issued to royal visitors of Puri during those two dramatic decades from 1731 to 1751, we come to the astonishing number of 65 letters. They amount to 47%

of all privilege letters so far known from the Khurda dynasty during the 17th and 18th centuries.

It is self-evident that this tremendous increase in the number of *chāmu ciṭāus* and privileges granted during these twenty years has nothing to do with an increase in the actual number of distinguished visitors to Puri and its Jagannātha temple. On the contrary, one could even assume that during these chaotic years less rājās might have visited Puri for a *darśan*. We are therefore fully justified in inferring from this evidence of Puri's *chāmu ciṭāus* that Khurda Rājās exerted their authority in the *kṣetra* Puri for strengthening and consolidation of their endangered *kṣatra*. This conclusion will be further corroborated by a detailed study of the historical circumstances in which special privileges were granted to those rājās of Orissa who supported the Khurda Rājās during these dangerous decades in mid-eighteenth century.[18]

Let me conclude with a short look at what happened to Khurda, its feudatory rājās and their privileges after the British conquest of Orissa in 1803. Mukunda Deva II, who had come to the throne in 1799, had initially supported the East India Company in its war against the Marathas on the assumption that the Company would help him to regain the control of those feudatory states which had come under the control of the Marathas in 1760. But soon his hope was frustrated and in 1804 he began an open rebellion which, however, was soon suppressed. Mukunda was imprisoned, the fort of Khurda stormed and destroyed and the remaining territory confiscated. This was the end of the Khurda dynasty. The East India Company, too, was well aware of the importance of Puri for the consolidation of its newly established rule in Orissa. Initially, Puri was even selected as the Collector's headquarters of Orissa "on account of its importance in connection with the pilgrim tax and the temple".[19] In 1805, the British Commissioner at Cuttack, John Melville, visited the great car festival at Puri. In an enthusiastic letter to the Private Secretary of the Governor General he wrote: "On all occasions when the subject of that valuable

---

[18] These details are dealt with in the forthcoming edition of these *chāmu ciṭāus*. .

[19] G. Toynbee, Sketch of the History of Orissa from 1803 to 1828, repr. in : *OHRJ*, 9, nos. 3/4 (1961) App., p. 31 (first published in Calcutta, 1873).

acquisition the province of Cuttack, is under consideration the important possession of the temple of Jaggernaut must stand in a prominent point of view; *in a political light its value is incalculable* and even as a source of Revenue to the state it will be found of great consequence."[20] But because of difficulties which the East India Company faced in their direct administration of the Jagannātha temple, Rājā Mukunda was released from Midnapore in 1809 and appointed Superintendent of the Temple. From being virtually "kings without a kingdom",[21] the Rājās of Puri succeeded in the following decades in compensating for the loss of their political power by building up a 'religious state' through the superintendence of the hereditary temple of the former imperial Gajapati kings of Orissa.

Having lost Khurda, his ancestral *kṣatra*, Mukunda depended now solely on the *kṣetra* of Puri in his attempt to regain, at least, a ritually dominant position among the rājās of Orissa. Whereas in a similar situation his forefathers had tried to enhance their position through "sharing" their ritual privileges in the Jagannātha cult with the feudatory rājās, Mukunda reversed this policy drastically. Like the imperial Gajapatis, who once had monopolized the "state cult" of Jagannātha, Mukunda refused to recognize the hereditary rights and privileges of the feudatory rājās.

A few months after Mukunda had become Superintendent of the Jagannātha temple, Rājā Padmanābha Nārāyaṇa Deva of Khimedi in southern Orissa came for a darśan of Jagannātha, but Mukunda would not permit him to enter the temple. The British Settlement Officer, therefore, forced Mukunda to give him permission, but the Puri Rājā persuaded the cooks of the temple not to prepare *mahāprasāda* food. "Upwards of four or five thousand souls" it was reported, "are now starving for want of necessary mahapersad including Rajah Puddohlab Narrain Deo and his followers as it is not proper nor comformable in their religion, to cook victuals in

20 J. Melville to Shawe (Private Secretary to Wellesley), Juggernauth, 11 July 1805 (Wellesley Papers, Add. Ms. 13611). (My emphasis)

21 H. Kulke, Kings with a Kingdom. The Rajas of Khurda and the Jagannatha Cult, in: *South Asia*, 4 (1974) 60-77.

their house in Pooree, when they come on pilgrimage, but only to live on Mahapersad."[22]

This treatment of the Rājā of Khimedi was not an isolated case. At the end of 1813 the Rājā of Khandpara, another feudatory state of central Orissa, entered Puri with "insignia of Rajahship" but was prevented by the Rājā of Puri from entering the temple. The Rājā of Khandpara complained to the Collector "stating that Rajah Muchoondeo prevented him making Durshan with himself and his family in the mode he has been accustomed and that he is agreeable to the customs and rules of the Temple".[23] Soon afterwards in a letter to the Governor-General, "three instances of offensive and contemptuous and disrespectful treatment" by the Rājā of Puri against feudatory rājās of Khemundi and Khandpara and against the Rani of Sambalpur were reported by the Board of Revenue at Cuttack.[24] Even if there are some doubts, which "royal insignia" were in fact agreeable to the customs,[25] it is evident that Mukunda Deva, as Superintendent of the Jagannātha temple, tried to restrict the rights of the feudatory rājās of Orissa in "his" Jagannātha temple, which had become the sole basis of his *kṣatra*.

---

[22] Busby, Collector of Tax to R. Mitford, Collector, Cuttack, 17 May 1810, *Jagannath Temple Correspondence*, vol. I, p. 183 (Orissa State Archives, Bhubaneswar).

[23] Trower, Collector to Busby, 29 January 1814, quoted by P. Mukherjee, *History of the Jagannath Temple in the 19th Century*, Calcutta 1977, p. 103.

[24] Richardson to Governor-General, Bengal Revenue Proceedings, No. 29 of 5 February 1814.

[25] At present altogether 9 *chāmu ciṭāus* are known to have been issued by the Khurda Rājās in favour of members of the rāj family of Khandpara from 1692 to 1773 A.D. None of them mentions specifically that the Khandpara Rājās were permitted to enter Puri with "royal insignia". On the contrary, three of them clearly state that they had to leave their palanquins outside the temple at the southern gate. Moreover, they were not allowed to take some of their paraphernalia inside the first temple compound as it is known in the case of the Rājā of Badakhemundi (see above). There is a strange discrepancy between two letters of the years 1772 and 1773. In the earlier case, the Rājā of Khandpara was permitted to do the *cāmara* service with a silver handle (JSV, p. 91 f) whereas a year later it is stated that "according to tradition" (*paraṃparāmāphike*) he performed the service with a handle wrapped in cotton cloth (*lugābenṭā cāmara sebā kale*, MP). An earlier letter of Rājā Rāmacandra II of the year 1734 just mentions the *cāmara sebā* of a Khandpara Rājā without any further specification (MP, 3, 6, 10 R).

Mukunda's "ritualistic fights" against certain feudatory rājās of Orissa, which "prevented the southern Rajahs and the Ghurjats from visiting the temple for several years" were observed with growing suspicion by the British administrators. They suspected him of using his superintendence of the Jagannātha temple for political ends. As early as 1814, the Member of the Board of Revenue at Cuttack warned the Government at Calcutta:

> I am informed by creditable authority sufficient to obtain my entire belief that the Rajah entertains and incalculates the belief that he will one day, *through the power and influence of Juggernaut*, be restored to the supreme command and authority of the Province of Cuttack, which tradition and family (oral or written) History state to have been invested in his ancestors previous to the establishment of the Musalman authority some centuries ago.[26]

During the short revolt of the deprived militia (*paika*) of Khurda in 1817, the "priests of the temple openly proclaimed the fall of the English rule and the restauration of the authority of the ancient line of sacred kings."[27]

Although Mukunda's dream never came true, these quotations from a time when Khurda had already lost the last remnants of its *kṣatra* for more than ten years, show that the popular belief in a strong relationship between political authority (*kṣatra*) and a sacred centre (*kṣetra*) was not a mere fiction created by royal priests or court poets. For centuries it had become an integral part of the political culture of the Hindu society.

---

[26] Richardson. (My emphasis)

[27] Toynbee, ibid., p. 18.

RATHAS AND RĀJĀS:
THE CAR FESTIVAL AT PURI

Jagannātha's car festival has been reported by numerous European travellers since the 14th century[1]. The 17th century descriptions of Bruton, Bernier[2], and Tavernier are most detailed and well-known. However, Thomas Bowrey is particularly interesting and informative:[3]

> *In that great and Sumptuous Diabolical Pagod, there Standeth their greatest God Jno. Gernaet[4], whence the Pagod received that name alsoe. This Imadge is of massy Gold very richly wrought, and in the full Stature of a man, kept in a large dark roome of it Selfe, but by the lustre of his Eys which are two Diamonds of Exceedinge Value, the place is by relation as light as though there were more then 2 Candles lighted...*
>
> *Sundry Festivall times they keep here with great Splendour, One amongst the rest continueth 7 or 8 days, to which Devilish feast resorteth many very rich Merchants and Brachmans, with many Others from the remotest Parts of Hindostan, in soe much that it is very rare if fewer than 150.000 persons resort to one of the festivalls at the great Pagod, and noe few thousands to the Subordinate Pagods in the whole*

---

1 For a comprehensive compilation (under "Juggurnaut") see *Hobson-Jobson. The Glossary of Colloquial Anglo-Indian Words and Phrases*, ed. by H. Yule and A.C. Burnell, repr., New Delhi 1968, p. 466-8. Furthermore see L.S.S. O'Malley, *Puri (Bengal District Gazetteers)*, Calcutta 1908, p. 107ff for Bruton (1633), Bernier (1667) and A. Hamilton (1727).

2 See note 30.

3 Thomas Bowrey, *A Geographical Account of Countries Round the Bay of Bengal*, 1669-79, ed. R.C. Temple, Cambridge: Hakluyt Society 1905, p. 16f.

4 R.C. Temple: "This is the most interesting variant I have come across of this much-corrupted name. The word is Jagan-nath, by metathesis such as is common in India, Jagannath, hence, of course, John Garnaet", in: *op. cit.*, p. 7.

Empire. The maine Spectacle and purpose is to behold their graven God Jno. Gernaet, which at Such times is carried in a Chariot (richly adorned and of curious and costly Workmanship) round the Pagod and through the broadest Streets of the towne in great triumph and with great Solemnitie.

This Chariot is of Exceedinge great weight, beinge made of Very Solid wood, very rich, with much iron worke thereon and finely Engraven, with the Shapes of men and women dancinge, as alsoe many hideous Shapes of Satyrs, bulls, bears, Tigers, Elephants, Rhinocerots, etc., in soe much that it is soe Ponderous, that although it be fitted Upon 6 or 8 Good Axletrees, with good wheels on each Side, yet requireth more then an hundred Stronge men to draw it alonge Upon hard and Smooth ground (and this they accompt the Arke of God).

In the Middle of that great Diabolicall Chariot, is placed theire great Patron Jno. Gernaet, having the foremost end Open, fairely to be beheld by many of the people, which in Generell they Endeavour to doe, but more than one halfe are prevented by the infinite multitude, in soe much that many of them are pressed downe by the crowde ... And which is both Stranger and more incredible, many of them come a great many miles to End their days here, Under the wheels of this ponderous but, accompted by them, holy Arke.

They Voluntarily and with great Couradge castinge themselves Under the wheels thereof, as it is drawne alonge, and are there crushed to death, the which is accompted by all of this Sect a most Noble, Heroike, and Zealous death.

Self-immolation under the wheels of Jagannātha's car was often reported in these early descriptions. Although by 1818 a young government officer referred only to three such incidents during the preceding four years of which one at least was an accident[5], the common belief in the frequency of these self-immolations and the propaganda of missionaries[6] against this "stronghold and fountain-

[5] A. Stirling, An Account, Geographical, Statistical and Historical, of Orissa Proper, or Cuttack, in: *Asiatick Researches*, XV (1822) 163-338 (see p. 324). See also P. Mukherjee, *History of the Jagannath Temple during the 19th Century*. Delhi 1977, pp. 294-307.

[6] J. Peggs, *Pilgrim Tax in India; Facts and Observations Relative to the Taxing of Pilgrims - Paying a Premium to those who Collect Tax for the Worship of Juggurnaut*, London 1830; F.B. Laurie, *Orissa the Garden of Superstition and Idolatry: Including an Account of British Connections with the Temple Jagannath*, London 1850.

head of idolatry" made "Juggurnaut a standing metapher"[7] synonymous with "anything to which persons blindly devote themselves, or are ruthlessly sacrificed"[8]. Ironically it was the very zeal of the missionaries that contributed to the resurgence of the Jagannātha cult, particularly in the late 19th century when the yearly car festival became again the most famous religious event in eastern India and a symbol of Oriya nationalism during the independence struggle.[9]

There can be no doubt that the fame and popularity of "the Lord of the Universe" both among foreigners and in the Hindu world are largely due to the car festival with its three chariots which carry Lord Jagannātha and his divine sister and brother, Subhadrā and Balabhadra, from their "Great Temple" (*baḍa deuḷa*) through Puri's "Great Street" (*baḍa daṇḍa*) to the Guṇḍicā temple, their summer residence for about nine days.

Most probably, the earliest literary evidence for the existence of the car festival at Puri occurs in the period of Somavaṃśa rule over Orissa. This was the first dynasty to be connected by legendary accounts of the temple chronicle of Puri[10] with the Jagannātha cult. A drama of the 10th or 11th century mentions the festival (*yātrā*) of the god Puruṣottama (=Jagannātha) at the sea shore.[11] Although no final proof is possible, scholars agree that this description most likely refers to the car festival at Puri, situated at

---

[7] Hobson-Jobson, *op. cit.,* p. 466.

[8] *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary,* third rev. ed., Oxford 1964. The abuse of poor Jagannātha has not yet died out. In a long article on German lorries ("Gentle German Juggernaut invades Britain") the *Sunday Times* wrote on 25.11.73: "Continental juggernaut have their multi-axle monster lorries ready to roll into Britain".

[9] G.N. Dash, Jagannātha and Oriya Nationalism, in: *CJ*, pp. 359-374; P. Mukherjee, in: *op.cit.*3.

[10] *Mādaḷā Pāñji,* ed. by A.B. Mohanty, repr. Bhubaneswar 1969, p. 4., See also H. Kulke, Early Royal Patronage of the Jagannātha Cult, in: *CJ*, p. 140ff.

[11] *Anargharāghava* of Murāri, see G.C. Tripathi, On the Concept of 'Puruṣottama' in the Āgamas, in: *CJ*, p. 38ff.

the sea shore.[12] The oldest iconographical evidence of the festival and its temple cars (*ratha*) comes from the later Gaṅga period (13th/14th centuries). A frieze of a dilapidated temple at Dhanmandal in northern Orissa depicts a sequence of three temple cars, each drawn by a large number of devotees.[13] The best preserved relief contains a number of interesting iconographical details: it depicts a car with 12 wheels (6 visible) without spokes. On the platform of the car rises a *maṇḍapa* adorned with a typical Orissan arched doorway (*toraṇa*) which forms the frame for the deity.[14] The roof of the *ratha* has a very clear pyramidal shape with four horizontal cornices and a typical ribbed finial (*amlā*) crowned by a potshaped *kalasa*-stone. This frieze thus clearly shows that the early *rathas* of Puri were modelled after the *piḍā* temple-type known mainly from the *jagamohan maṇḍapas* or frontal halls of the Orissan temples. Their characteristic pyramidal roof made its first full appearance at the Mukteśvara temple in the early 10th century and found its classical design in the Liṅgarāja temple at Bhubaneswar (late 11th century). The frieze also depicts, before and behind the *ratha*, two umbrellas (*chatra*) and two standards which are carried to indicate the royal status of the deity on the car. These symbols of royalty are still carried before the Rājā of Puri when he approaches the *rathas*.

Today, the *rathas* of the three deities are distinguished by size, colour and number of wheels. Jagannātha's *ratha (nandighoṣa)* is 13.5m high and is supported by 16 wheels; it is covered by red and yellow cloth; Balabhadra's *ratha (taladhvaja)*, adorned by red and green cloth, stands on 14 wheels and has a height of 13.2m;

---

[12] G.C. Tripathi, *op. cit.*, p. 37. See also Kedarnath Mahapatra, The Antiquity of Puri-Jagannatha as a place of Pilgrimage, in: *OHRJ*, III (1954), pp. 6-21.

[13] The frieze, now in front of the Orissa State Museum at Bhubaneswar, belonged to a temple at Dhanmandal on the main pilgrim road to Puri. The temple is of late Gaṅga origin (13th-14th century A.D.). Of the three cars only the middle one has been preserved undamaged. Of the third group only the devotees still exist.

[14] The deity does not conform exactly to the Jagannātha image as depicted in several excellent reliefs at the Sūrya temple of Konarak (1250 A.D.). Contrary to the images of Konarak, which more strongly resemble wooden pillar deities (as the hypothetical prototypes of Jagannātha), the image on the Dhanmandal shows a clearly discernible waistline, chest, head and pendent arms.

Subhadra's car (*darpadalana or deviratha*) in red and black is supported by 12 wheels and is 12.9m high.[15] The wheels of all three cars have 16 spokes like their stone counterparts at the sun temple of Konarak. Other temple cars in Orissa, e.g. the chariot of Lord Liṅgarāja in Bhubaneswar, usually have wheels of solid wood like the *rathas* depicted in the early reliefs at Dhanmandal. It is likely, therefore, that wheels with spokes at Puri are a later invention, imitating Konarak.

One characteristic of the *rathas* of Puri and elsewhere in Orissa is their decoration with large pieces of differently coloured cloth. In Puri the changeable sea wind modifies the contours of the cars. At times they are puffed up, or the cloth may be heavily pressed against the inner wooden framework; at noon, the cover may hang down slackly.

Contrary to the earliest depiction on the Dhanmandal frieze, the present *rathas* of Puri appear to resemble the *rekha* temple-type of Orissan architecture. This type is characterized by the grand design of the curvilinear spire (*gaṇḍi or śikhara*) of the main temple tower "greatly enhanced by the vertical lines of strongly emphasized ribs"[16] (e.g. the Liṅgarāja or Jagannātha temples). The resemblance is most evident in pictures which show the *rathas* in front of the Jagannātha temple, but it is mainly due to the coloured cloth covering it with its distinct vertical lines. The wooden framework, which is visible only during the time of construction, reveals in the upper portions of the *rathas* clear horizontal cornices characterizing the *piḍā* temple. For an architectural model of the *rathas* we have to go to Bhubaneswar, to the 14th century Bhaskareśvara temple which encloses an alleged Aśokan pillar.[17] However, it is still not clear whether the Bhaskareśvara temple was constructed after the model of a *ratha* or *vice versa*. It is worth noting that the roof of the Bhaskareśvara temple seems to combine the *piḍā* and *rekha* types of Orissan temple architecture: the clearly discernible cornices, characteristic of the *piḍā* temples, recede on the Bhaska-

---

[15] K.C. Mishra, *The Cult of Jagannath*, Calcutta 1971, p. 132.

[16] A. Coomaraswamy, *History of Indian and Indonesian Art*, 1927, p. 115.

[17] K.C. Panigrahi, *Archaeological Remains of Bhubaneswar*, Bombay 1960.

reśvara temple not, as in the case of the usual *piḍā* roof, uniformly to a pyramidal roof but progressively to create the characteristic curvilinear shape of the *rekha* temple tower. The shape of the "roof" of the Puri *rathas* combines both architectural models similarly and thus unifies by architectural means the main temple of the deity and the three *maṇḍapas* meant for priests and devotees.[18] During the *ratha yātrā* when "the Lord of the Universe" leaves his "jewelled lion throne" (*ratnasiṃhāsana*) in order to appear to his devotees, even to the most humble, the *ratha* thus transforms the separate temple buildings of the "divine palace" into an ideal typ of a Hindu temple, drawn by devotees from all social strata and pilgrims from all quarters of the Hindu world.

Puri's *rathas* are thus an example of "mobile architecture" in a double sense. Their consecration on the eve of the *ratha yātrā*[19] and their outer shape identify them as the main temples during *ratha yātrā*. Moving from the "Lion's Gate" (*siṃhadvāra*) in front of the Jagannātha temple to the Guṇḍicā temple, a distance of about 3 km, they extend the ritual and sacred sphere of the temple into major parts of the town, thus transforming Puri (="town") into a veritable temple city.

They are also "mobile" in a more metaphoric sense. Each drawn by hundreds of devotees, the *rathas* and their divine occupants move many more thousands of devotees into a state of excitement. It is not the mere appearance of the god outside his temple which excites his devotees.[20] The fascination of the devotees is caused by the movement of the deities and their *rathas*. The moment when the first of the three chariots starts to move through the joint efforts of the devotees is the climax of the whole *ratha yātrā*. Each

---

[18] The characteristic architectural assemblage of Orissa's temples consists of the main *deuḷa* (temple), the *jagamohana, nāṭamaṇḍapa* (dance hall) and the *bhogamaṇḍapa* (hall of offerings). The *deuḷa* follows the *rekha* type, whereas the *maṇḍapas* follow the *piḍā* type.

[19] The *Nīti*, a manual of the 17th century of Jagannātha's ritual (*nīti*), gives a detailed description of the *pratiṣṭha* ceremony of the *rathas*.

[20] There is a great difference between the excited reaction of the people at Puri during *ratha yātrā* and the devoted "observation" during *snāna yātrā* (bathing festival) when Jagannātha and his brother and sister also appear ouside their main temple on a special platform on top of the temple wall.

car is drawn with four ropes by hundreds of pilgrims who are further incited by the rythmic sound of brass gongs beaten by priests standing in two rows on each car. In earlier days, dancing girls (*devadāsi*) performed their art at the same time in front of the "Lord of the Universe". This mass religious excitement sometimes caused accidents[21] and, in rare cases, certainly induced devotees to perform the act of self-immolation under the chariot wheels.

Among the major car festivals of India, Puri's *ratha yātrā* has two unique features. Firstly, contrary to the practice particularly in South India, Puri's cars are constructed anew each year and then, after the *ratha yātrā*, demolished. Only their uppermost portion (*kalasa*), the nine small painted wood carvings and the wooden horses attached to each car,[22] are retained to be used again. Secondly, the Jagannātha cult of Puri is more directly associated with kingship than most of India's great places of pilgrimage. Both peculiarities had direct economic and political implications. Economically, they required the regular procurement of an enormous quantity of wood as well as iron and ropes, and their sale after the gods had returned to the main temple. Politically, they meant the partial inclusion of the temple cars into the scope of royal legitimation and, in some cases, even into the power struggles among the rulers of Orissa.

The association of the kings of Orissa with the Jagannātha cult became very close after king Anaṅgabhīma III had recognized Jagannātha as the overlord and state deity of Orissa in 1230 A.D. and claimed to rule under his supreme overlordship (*sāmarājya*). It is therefore surprising that the first known reference to the relation of the Gajapati kings of Orissa with the car festival of Puri is contained in the report of a European, Frias Odori, in the year 1321: *Annually on the recurrence of the day when the idol was made,*

---

[21] Even in the year 1855, when the car festival was under full control of the police stationed at Puri, a tragic accident happended: *A number of people said to be about 50 fell or were pushed by the mob and before they could all recover themselves or be rescued one of the cars had passed over 5 of them killing three and severely mutilating two others.* A.S. Anand, Magistrate of Puri to Commissioner of Cuttack, 9.7.1855 (*Jagannath Temple Correspondence,* vol. III, p. 631, Orissa State Archives).

[22] The *Record of Rights of Shri Jagannath Temple* also mentions wooden images of drivers which nowadays no longer seem to exist. (*Record-of-Right, 1953,* vol. II, p. 69).

the folk of the country come and take it down, and put it on a fine chariot; and then the King and Queen, and the whole body of the people, join together and draw it forth from church with loud singing of songs and all kinds of music.[23]

The lack of other early references to the participation of the Gajapati kings in the yearly car festivals may lead to the inference that, initially, the king's role might have been confined to casual visits. This situation changed fundamentally under the Sūryavaṃśī kings in the 15th century. The first two kings of this powerful dynasty, Kapilendra and Puruṣottama, were both usurpers. In the year 1434 A.D. Kapilendra overthrew the last legitimate king of the Gaṅga dynasty and his son Puruṣottama usurped the throne in spite of the legitimate claims of his elder brother. Both kings, therefore, needed a special legitimation of their rule which they gained through an intimate association with the Jagannātha cult of Puri. Kapilendra threatened his opponents in many of his inscriptions with the wrath of the "Lord of the Universe", stigmatizing attacks on himself as treason (*droha*) against the Lord of Puri and calling himself a servitor (*sevaka*) of Jagannātha.[24] After his son Puroṣottama had established himself on the Gajapati throne, he knew no bounds in pouring gifts over the god and priests of Puri. Furthermore, he was the first king to become associated with the important ritual of cleaning the cars (*cherā pahaṃrā*).

Even today, the car festival cannot start before the Rājā or his representative (*mudarasta*) has sprinkled (*cherā*) the three cars with water and cleaned (*pahaṃrā*) them with a broom. From a 17th century source we know that the Rājā, after finishing the ritual *cherā pahaṃrā* cleaning, put a silk-covered pillow (*pāṭa muculā*) on his head and symbolically pushed the cars from behind, thus starting the car festival.[25] The *cherā pahaṃrā* ritual has firstly to be interpreted as a sign of great devotion to Krishna with whom Jagannātha meanwhile had become identified. But it is still a

---

[23] Quoted in *Hobson-Jobson*, p. 466.

[24] Puri inscription of the year 1464 A.D.; K.B. Tripathy, *The Evolution of Oriya Language and Script*, 1962, p. 272.

[25] *Nīti*, p. 85.

matter of controversy whether the powerful kings of the Sūryavaṃśa dynasty agreed to perform this self-abasing ritual out of a position of weakness[26] or in order to check the growing influence of the priests.[27] However, it is beyond doubt that the *cherā pahaṃrā* of the *rathas* of Puri became the main source of legitimacy of the later Kings of Khurda and Puri. Today, the grand ceremony of sweeping the cars remains the most important "royal duty" (*rājanīti*) which bears the proud name "Gajapati Mahārāja Sevā". It makes the "Mahārājas" of Puri indispensable to the festival even now, long after they have lost all their ancestral territory around Khurda (1804) and, a few years ago, their remaining royal privileges at Puri.[28]

The special relationship between the Gajapati kings of Orissa and the Jagannātha cult of Puri culminated under the Rājās of Khurda who were able to establish themselves as local successors to the "Imperial Gajapatis" after the latter's extermination by Muslim armies in 1568 A.D. The legitimation of the Rājās of Khurda was mainly based on the renewal of the Jagannātha cult by Rāmacandra I in the years 1590-91 and - initially - on the recognition of Khurda's semi-autonomous status by Emperor Akbar. But under his successor Jahāngīr (1605-27), Cuttack became the capital of the newly established province of Orissa and within a few years Khurda lost its privileged status after three devastating attacks by the new rulers of Orissa.

The first attack was led by Keśo Dās Mārū, a Hindu Rajput in the service of Jahāngīr. The history of early Mughal rule in eastern India contains a detailed description of Keśo's surprise attack on Puri and makes an interesting reference to the use of temple cars

---

[26] This position is championed by G.N. Dash, The Evolution of Priestly Power: The Sūryavaṃśī Period, in: *CJ*, p. 209-21.

[27] As advocated by the present author.

[28] *Record of Rights of Shri Jagannath Temple,* comp. by L. Panda, vol. III, p. 12, published in the Orissa Gazette (Extraordinary), Cuttack, 14.10.1955. See also H. Kulke, Kings without Kingdom. The Rajas of Khurda and the Jagannatha Cult, *Southasia,* IV (1974) 76f.

for military purposes.[29] Under the pretext of pilgrimage, Keśo entered Puri during the car festival with a small band of followers in order to loot the famous temple treasure of Jagannātha "worth more than 20-30 millions". When the Rājā of Khurda arrived with his army, Keśo entrenched himself in the Jagannātha temple. The Rājā of Khurda *made five hundred to one thousand men ride on each rath which was pulled by two to three thousand men, and thus, carrying the raths in tens and twenties, he pushed them on to the outer wall of the temple and put the inmates into a very serious plight.*[30] But when the soldiers on the cars began to shoot, Keśo Dās and his men in the Jagannātha temple returned the attack with burning sticks and arrows, setting fire to all the temple cars and killing hundreds of Khurda soldiers. Although details of the description are untrustworthy, particularly the large numbers of temple cars, there seems to be some truth behind the story because the temple chronicle of Puri, too, mentions fierce fighting with "Keśomaru" during which the temple cars were completely destroyed.[31]

After the Rājās of Khurda had lost their military and political power during these fights, they turned their attention to Puri and systematically enlarged their influence and control over the Jagannātha cult during the peaceful reign of Shāhjahān. Since then an intricate set of temple - palace relations has evolved, which became the main basis for Khurda's influential position during its power struggle with the various feudatory states and the Muslim Governors of Orissa. The car festivals played an important role during this struggle. With the exception of a few iconoclasts, the Muslim Governors of Orissa were genuinely interested in enlarging

---

29 *Bahāristān-i-Ghaybī. A History of the Moghul Wars in Assam, Cooch Behar, Bengal, Bihar and Orissa during the Reigns of Jahāngīr and Shāhjahān,* by Mirza Nathan, transl. by M.J. Borah, vol. I, pp. 35-8.

30 *Ibid.,* Mirza's fantastic story reminds one of the description of the temple cars given by F. Bernier who travelled in India in the years 1656-68: "*A superb wooden machine is constructed, such as I have seen in several other parts of the Indies, with I know not how many grotesque figures. This machine is set on fourteen or sixteen wheels like those of a gun-carriage, and drawn or pushed along by the united exertions of fifty or sixty persons*", F. Bernier, *Travels in the Moghul Empire A.D. 1556-63.* Translation by A. Constable, 2nd ed. London 1916, p. 304.

31 *Mādaḷā Pāñji*, p. 65.

their control over the *ratha yātrā* because of the pilgrim tax which formed a substantial part of their revenue.[32] The Rājās of Khurda, on the other hand, used the car festivals to maintain their influential position in Puri. The festivals afforded an excellent opportunity to display their role as successors to the Imperial Gajapatis and "First Servitors" of Lord Jagannātha among the various Hindu Rājās and princes in attendance.

Beginning in the 17th century, the Rājās of Khurda issued "royal letters" (*chāmu ciṭau*) to the feudatory rājās of Orissa, granting them certain privileges in the Jagannātha cult in order to gain their loyalty and political support. A study of these letters provides an interesting picture of Khurda's ritual-political relations with the other feudatory states of Orissa.[33] All the following documents,[34] but a few of the hundreds that existed, were issued by Vīrakeśarī Deva (1737-93) during whose long rule Khurda's political power finally collapsed after the Marathas had conquered Orissa in the year 1751. During the preceding fights between the Muslim armies of the Nawāb of Bengal and the Marathas of Nagpur, and even after the Marathas had deprived Khurda of its feudatories and taken over the administration of the Jagannātha temple in 1760, Rājā Vīrakeśarī of Khurda desperately tried to maintain his leading position among the Hindu rājās of Orissa. For this purpose he issued "royal letters", permitting feudatory rājās to contribute to the yearly construction of the *rathas* and rewarding them with special privileges in the Jagannātha cult during *ratha yātrā.*

The regular supply of wood for the construction of the three *rathas* played an important role in this connection. Since the Maratha period it was the privilege of the Rājās of Daspalla, whose territory comprised large jungles at the southern bank of the

---

[32] During their struggle with the Muslim Governors of Cuttack, the Rājās of Khurda often removed the images of Puri to the mountainous south, causing a loss of 900.000 Rupees to the imperial revenue. In 1736, therefore the strange event happened that a Muslim Governor forcibly brought back the images and reinstalled them at Puri. (*Riyāz-us-Salātīn: A History of Bengal by Ghulām Husain Salīm,* transl. M.A. Salam, Calcutta 1902-4, p. 302). For further details see above chapter 3.

[33] See chapter 4.

[34] ibid.

Mahanadi, to provide the wood in lieu of tributes. This privilege was acknowledged even by the East India Company in its treaty with Daspalla in the year 1804.[35] The wood was rafted down the Mahanadi river and its Katchuri branch up to the Artharnala bridge at Puri. In cases of severe drought, when the waterway on the Mahanadi became unpassable, the Rājās of Khurda had to organize an alternative. On March 3rd, 1749, King Vīrakeśarī therefore sent a royal order (*ājñā*) to the superintendent (*parīkṣa*) of the Jagannātha temple: "*The timbers required for the construction of the cars of the deities could not come up to Athamala (bridge). So people have been deputed to Banpur for procuring the required timbers. These timbers will be cut from the forest on the boundaries of the two states Ghumsur and Athgarh* (in South Orissa). *Saris* (turbans, as sign of honour) *should be sent from the temple store for the two chieftains. The saris similar to those sent on previous occasions at the time of procurement of timbers should be sent through the royal messenger.*"[36]

Iron, necessary for the construction of the cars, was procured from the feudatory Rājās of Dhenkanal and Talcher in central Orissa. Thus on May 1st, 1744, Vīrakeśarī issued a royal order (*hukum*) to the temple officers at Puri to "*send saris and mahāprasāda* (sacred food offered to Jagannātha) *to the Rājās of Dhenkanal and Talcher for supplying the iron for the cars.*"[37]

Ranpur, another feudatory state in central Orissa and an important ally of Khurda, used to provide ropes for constructing and drawing the cars. On April 9th, 1749, a letter was issued from the palace: "*For the construction of the nandighoṣa* ratha (Jagannātha's car) *seasoned simuli ropes will be brought. So the royal messenger Jamai Atibuddhi should be deputed to Narendra, the Rājā of Ranpur, with sari*

---

[35] According to the treaty of the year 1804, Daspalla had to pay "no peshcus, or tribute or payment or nuzzur" (Aitchison, *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sanads*, Calcutta 1864, p. 194). According to Cobden-Ramsay, *Feudatory States of Orissa*, Calcutta 1910, (*Bengal Gazetteers*, vol. 21) the concession to supply timber for the *rathas* of Puri in lieu of taxes, was granted by the Marathas only for a part of the state (p. 159).

[36] Chāmu Ciṭau of the *Mādaḷā Pāñji*, No. MP, 2, 3, 2 V.

[37] MP, 2, 8, 23 R. Both places seem to have produced iron locally. Today Talcher is known for its coalfields.

and mahāprasāda from the temple store."[38] Other documents from the temple records of Puri show that Vīrakeśarī's father had already rendered in return for Ranpur's military and economic support several important privileges in the Jagannātha cult[39] and tax reduction for Ranpur's monastery at Puri.[40] In return, Ranpur's Rājās donated valuable gifts to the temple treasury.

Other chiefs and rājās of Orissa received special privileges during the car festival as a reward for their support to the Khurda Rājās. Most desirable in this connection seems to have been the permission to serve god Jagannātha with a special *cāmara* fan (prepared by hair of a yak tail) during *ratha yātrā*. In 1760, Vīrakeśarī granted this among other privileges to the Rājā of Tigeria of central Orissa and in 1778 to the *mahant* of the Chikiti monastery in Puri. Chikiti was an important princely state in south Orissa and the abbot of its monastery in Puri played the role of "ambassador" at the court of the Gajapatis.

Another rare document from the collection of the temple scribe of Puri (*deuḷa karaṇa*) is of great value. It contains a continuous, though short, narrative about the attempt of the Rājā of Parlakhemundi in south Orissa to capture the Gajapati kingship through occupation of Jagannātha's *ratha* and through performance of the royal rituals (*rājanītis* or *upacāra*) of the Gajaptis of Khurda on the *ratha*. The Rājās of Parlakhemundi, claiming to be descendents of the imperial Gaṅgas who ruled over Orissa until 1434, had never accepted Khurda's claim to Gajapati kingship.[41]

In 1753, two years after the conquest of Orissa by the Marathas of Nagpur and before their rule was finally established there, Rājā Jagannātha Narāyana Deva of Parlakhemundi saw an opportunity

---

[38] MP, 2, 8, 25 R. Another short royal order on the same effect is known from April 19th, 1741 (MP, 2, 8, 15 V).

[39] A Rājā of Ranpur was appointed bodyguard of Jagannātha by performing the honourable "dagger and sword service" (*curi khaṇḍa sevā*) in front of Jagannātha (MP, 2, 9, 17 R).

[40] *Jagannātha Sthalavṛttānam*, p. 95 (Government Oriental Manuscript Library Madras, folios D. No. 2612-R. No. 1220).

[41] S.N. Rajaguru, *History of the Gangas*, vol. II, Bhubaneswar 1972.

to come forward with his claim to the Gajapati throne. With a troop of 2000 followers and all the paraphernalia of royalty he visited the *ratha yātrā* at Puri:

> *On that day* [July 12th, 1753], *Jagannātha Narāyaṇa Deva of Parlapaṭana* (Parlakhemundi) *had come together with his brother to see the return festival [of the cars] from the Guṇḍicā temple [to the main temple]. On his elephant there was a royal nagara drum ... and also a flag-staff ... and a royal seat. The elephant was placed in front of [Jagannātha's] car and [the two brothers] ascended the ratha [from the back of the elephant] to have darśan. The presents offered by them were taken by the Daitapati priests. During the darśan of the Great Lord on the Nandighoṣa car a necklace fell from the holy body of the Lord. Narāyaṇa Deva asked to be given the necklace but in this moment all priests hid the necklace, gave him tulasi and prasāda (offerings) and sent [secretly] the divine necklace to the King. [On the next day] the cars reached the Lion's Gate of the Temple towards the close of the night. Being dressed in royal robes, Narāyaṇa Deva and his brother sat on the ratha. On the same day all the priests ... had a confidential discussion because of the darśan [of the Rājā of P. and his brother] in full royal dress on the ratha and the possibility of their entering into the temple [in royal dress]. It was dawn before the discussion was over. Because these two people, while sitting on the car, demanded to be allowed to discharge the duties (upacara) of the King during the time of the ceremonial return [of the deities from the cars into the temple], this ceremony did not take place. Consequently the three incense offerings (dhupa) were performed on the car and Narāyaṇa Deva went away. [On the next day] the deities stayed on the cars ... After the three incense offerings had been performed, the ceremonial return of the deities to his temple began at 10.30 in the night. Wearing a royal turban and a belt, Narāyaṇa Deva followed the Great Lord and walked majestically [into the temple].*[42]

Narāyaṇa Deva returned to the temple the next day in royal dress and, together with the Maratha General Mahana Singh, worshipped Jagannātha. But due to the passive resistance of the priests of Puri he did not succeed in his attempt to perform royal rituals and thus to win acceptance as the legitimate Gajapati king. As a

---

[42] MP, 5, 1, 61 V.

compromise, he seems to have been allowed to enter the temple in full royal robes.

The generous distribution of privileges to their feudatories by the Khurda Rājās during car festivals and the attempt of another rājā to capture the *ratha*, proves to what extent the temple cars could also assume a definite political role. Temporarily they combined the functions of palace and temple, and in a modern sense - being at the centre of mass communication in traditional society - they functioned like a radio or TV station. The message that rājās and priests announced through them was carried home by thousands of pilgrims even to the remotest villages.

Due to the ritual policy of the Rājās of Khurda, the Jagannātha cult of Hindu royalty spread to the capitals of the former feudatory states of Orissa during the 18th and 19th centuries. Several new capitals were constructed during the 19th century with a Jagannātha temple and a palace in their centre and with a *baḍa daṇḍa* leading to a usually rather small Guṇḍicā hut outside the town (e.g. Tigeria, Baramba, Ranpur, Daspalla). They were imitating the model of Puri where the present palace was constructed at the *baḍa daṇḍa* near the Jagannātha temple in the middle of the 19th century. In most capitals of the former feudatory states of Orissa, Jagannātha's car festival became the main event in the religious calendar. The cars usually imitated the *rathas* of Puri. The three cars at Ranpur and the great *ratha* of Balabhadra at Keonjhar are excellent examples. The latter has 16 wheels like Puri's but it remains undemolished throughout the whole year outside Balabhadra's temple until the next *ratha yātrā*.

During the car festivals, several rājās of former feudatory states engaged tribes which inhabited the hinterland of their "capitals", similar to the way rājās of Khurda gave a share to their feudatory Rājās. One example occurs in a script of the *Rājaguru* of Keonjhar:

> *The Rājā placed on the Bhuiyans* (tribe) *the responsibility for making the ropes by which the chariot is dragged. He also engaged them in the dragging, and during Deva Snana and Shri Gundicha* (the car festival) *they are to prepare the chara* (-steps) *on the singhasana inside the temple and on the chariot for ascending and descending of the Thakurs. Previously the Bhuiyans enjoyed rent free land and there was no land settlement for them. So the Rājā directed them to pay oilseeds. This has been imposed on them in the name of Pahika. Even*

today, the Gada Majhi (a Bhuiyan leader) *gives them notice to come before each car festival for making the ropes. Even the Juangas* (tribe) *were directed to make the ropes. They bring the ropes in procession, shouting the slogan "Hari Gola". They come carrying them on their shoulders just before the car-festival and tie them to the chariot. They must also be present during the dragging of the chariot to connect the ropes in case they become disconnected. For this they receive an honorarium and clothes from the temple. In this way the Rājā made Bhuiyans and Juangs engage in affairs of the temple.*[43]

---

43 Madan Mohan Mishra, *Data on the Ex-State of Keonjhar,* manuscript prepared for the Orissa Research Project, 1974.

KṢATRIYAIZATION AND SOCIAL CHANGE
A Study in the Orissa Setting

In his famous book *Religion and Society among the Coorgs of South India* M.N. Srinivas in 1952 for the first time used the term "Sanskritization" in a way which had a deep impact on further anthropological research in India. He states: "The caste system is far from being a rigid system in which the position of each component caste is fixed for all time. Movement has always been possible, and especially so in the middle regions of the hierarchy. A low caste was able, in a generation or two, to rise to a higher position in the hierarchy by adopting vegetarianism and teetotalism, and by Sanskritizing its ritual and pantheon. In short, it took over, as far as possible, the customs, rites and beliefs of the Brahmins, and the adoption of the Brahminic way of life by a low caste seems to have been frequent, though theoretically forbidden. This process has been called 'Sanskritization' in this book, in preference to 'Brahminization', as certain Vedic rites are confined to Brahmins and the two other 'twice-born' castes. The tendency of the lower castes to imitate the higher has been a powerful factor in the spread of Sanskritic ritual and customs, and in the achievement of a certain amount of cultural uniformity not only throughout the caste scale, but over the entire length and breadth of India."[1]

From a historical and indological point of view the main merit of Srinivas' theory lies in the fact that it created a theoretical framework which helps to link the research on the "little communities" of Indian villages with the traditional field of Indology, the Sanskritic All-India tradition or, to use another controversial term, with the "Great Tradition" of India. The term "Sanskritization" thus became a helpful transmission-belt between history-oriented and social anthropological research. It also provided a sound basis for the discussion on the extent to which values were, and still are,

---

[1] M.N. Srinivas, *Religion and Society among the Coorgs of South India,* 2nd ed., London 1965, p. 30.

influencing social change in India. Srinivas' theory also gave a further impetus to destroy the myth of the Indian village being an "isolated whole".[2] It is not the aim of this paper to enter into a detailed discussion of the usefulness of the term Sanskritization. Its aim is to make a few remarks on using the terms Sanskritization and Kṣatriyaization in their socio-functional context.

One of the main difficulties in accepting and using the term "Sanskritization" is that it denotes *pars pro toto* a complex process after only one of its aspects, i.e. the language. The term, therefore, was bound to become as controversial as similar terms, i.e. "Aryanization",[3] "Hinduization", and "Brahmanization" which are derived from the aspects of race, religion and caste, respectively. The difficulties which originate from the necessity to subsume a complex process under the name of one of its aspects are multiplied by the fact that none of these different terms is sufficient to describe the corresponding aspect in its totality. Thus, for instance, Sanskrit has never been the only language through which Sanskritization developed. In many parts of India local languages were far more important than Sanskrit in the process of "Sanskritization".[4] The agents of "Brahmanization" likewise were not always Brahmins and many Brahmin habits differed from time to time and area to area. Lastly, "the word (Hinduization) suggests that many of the lower castes are not Hindus which is not true."[5]

Despite such difficulties with the term "Sankritization" the relevance of the *process* itself for social change in India (whether medieval or contemporary) has never been seriously challenged by scholars, especially if we take "westernization" as a complement rather than as a dichotomic antithesis. The usefulness of the

---

[2] McKim Marriot, Little Communities in an Indigenous Civilization, in: idem, *Village India*, Chicago 1955, pp. 174-176. M.N. Srinivas and A.M. Shah, The Myth of the Self-Sufficiency of the Indian Village, in: *Economic Weekly*, 12 (1960), 1375-78.

[3] In his book *A History of South India* K.A. Nilakanta Sastri wrote a chapter about this process in the early phase of South Indian history under the headline "The Dawn of History: Aryanization", 2nd ed., Madras 1958, pp. 65-78.

[4] J.F. Staal, Sanskrit and Sanskritization, in: *JAS*, 22 (1962/63) 261-275.

[5] A.P. Barnabas, Sanskritization, in: *Economic Weekly*, 13 (1961), 613.

theoretical framework increased through suggestions and comments of various scholars. In 1955 an important contribution was made by McKim Marriot who emphasized that "while elements of the great tradition have become parts of local festivals, they do not appear to have entered village festival custom *at the expense of*[6] much that is or was the little tradition."[7] In 1959 E.B. Harper, in an article on a Hindu village pantheon,[8] came to the conclusion that the distinction between Sanskritic and non-Sanskritic village deities could be *functional* rather than historical.

A further point concerns the "Brahmanical model" of Sanskritization. After Srinivas had been criticized by various scholars, in 1966 he frankly admitted: "I now realize that in both my book on Coorg religion and my 'Note on Sankritization and Westernization' I emphasized unduly the Brahmanical model of Sanskritization and ignored the other models - Kṣatriya, Vaishya, and Shudra."[9] Srinivas then goes on to refer to the studies of D.F. Pocock and Milton Singer[10] who emphasize the Kṣatriya model of Sanskritization (or "Rajputization").[11] In connection with social mobility in pre-British India, Srinivas stresses the fluidity of the political system. He therefore turns "briefly to a secondary source of mobility in that system - the king or other acknowledged political head of an area. The latter had the power to promote or demote castes inhabiting his kingdom. The Mahārāja of Cochin, for

---

[6] McKim Marriot refers here to Srinivas' statement: "The lower castes have a tendency to take over the customs and rites of the higher castes, and this ensures the spread of Sanskritic cultural and ritual forms at the expense of others" (M.N. Srinivas, *Religion and Society among the Coorgs of South India*, 2nd ed., London 1965, p. 209)

[7] McKim Marriot, *op. cit.*, p. 196.

[8] E.B. Harper, A Hindu Village Pantheon, in: *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology*, 15 (1959) 227-234. Quoted by Staal, *op. cit.*, p. 264.

[9] M.N. Srinivas, *Social Change in Modern India*, Berkeley and Los Angeles 1966, p. 7.

[10] D.F. Pocock, The Movement of Castes, in: *Man*, 1955, 71-72; Milton Singer, Social Organisation of Indian Civilisation, in: *Diogenes*, 45 (1964) 85-119.

[11] Surajit Sinha, State Formation and Rajput Myth in Tribal Central India, in: *Man in India*, 42 (1962) 35.

instance, had the power to raise the rank of castes in his kingdom, and the final expulsion of anyone from caste required his sanction."[12] Referring to H.J. Maynard's study on the king's influence upon the growth of castes,[13] he gives two possible reasons why rājās or zamindārs promoted the status of a caste: support during war and payment for permission to wear the sacred thread.

In 1963 S.K. Srivastava gave an interesting example of how both lower castes and even Brahmins in rural Agra are "Kṣatriyaizing" their way of life, due to the dominant position of Kṣatriya groups. "When the Brahmins became the land-owning class or the zamindars, they tried to imitate the Kṣatriya groups in order to aquire the status of the landlord rather than of the Brahmin priests."[14]

So far Kṣatriyaization has largely been considered as a process of social and cultural change following the "Kṣatriya model", thus being a process complementary to Srinivas' "Brahmin model" of Sanskritization. The term Kṣatriyaization, however, should not be confined to those cases of Sanskritization where other castes are merely imitating the Kṣatriya way of life. The term should be used in its wider functional sense rather than in terms of Kṣatriya rites and status symbols adopted by other castes. In its functional sense Kṣatriyaization describes social change "from above" which was initiated in tribal areas by the Kṣatriyas, i.e. zamindārs, chiefs or rājās in order to strengthen their legitimation as Hindu rājās in their own society and to broaden the basis of their economic and political power.

The following pages refer mainly to the transition period of the 18th century when the direct rule of the Mughals was replaced in Orissa for about three decades by that of the Nawābs of Bengal till 1751 when the Marathas of Nagpur were able to establish their

---

[12] M.N. Srinivas, (1966), *op. cit.*, p. 41.

[13] H.J. Maynard, Influence of the Indian King upon the Growth of Castes, in: *Journal of the Panjab Historical Society,* 6, 2 (1917) 88-100.

[14] S.K. Srivastava, The Process of Desanskritization in Village India, in: Bala Ratnam (ed.), *Anthropology on the March,* Madras 1963, p. 266. It is astonishing that Srivastava takes the Kṣatriyaization of certain aspects of the life of the Brahmins for a case of Desanskritization, an assumption which is possible only if we restrict the Sanskritic "great tradition" of India to the Brahmin tradition only.

supremacy there. But they, too, were ousted soon when the East India Company conquered Orissa in 1803. Bernard Cohn differentiates four levels of the political system during the 18th century as follows: a) imperial, b) secondary (successor states), c) regional, and d) local.[15] After the final destruction of the last independent Hindu kingdom of Orissa in A.D. 1568, the four corresponding levels in Orissa are: a) the Mughals, b) the Nawābs of Bengal (followed by the Bhonslas of Nagpur), c) the Sūbahdārs at Cuttack and d) the rājās and local chiefs of the "Garhjat (*gaḍajāta*) Mahals" or feudatory states of Orissa.

The peculiar political situation of post-sixteenth century Orissa is based on the existence of the Rājās of Khurda-Puri who had been recognized by Rājā Mān Singh, Akbar's famous general, as successors of the erstwhile "imperial" Gajapati kings of Orissa. Their political status was that of a rājā of the regional level, thus being in direct competition with the Mughal and Maratha Sūbahdārs in Cuttack. Consequently the Sūbahdārs of the Mughals and the Nawābs tried and the Marathas finally succeeded in reducing the status of the Khurda Rājās to the level of a local Hindu rājā. Regarding their legitimacy in the traditional hierarchy, however, they were recognized throughout this period by most of the Garhjat Rājās as a legitimate political authority of the second level.

The high esteem in which the Khurda Rājās were held is based on their relationship with the cult of Jagannāth and its temple at Puri. Under the Gaṅga and Sūryavaṃśa dynasties (ca. 1112-1540/68) Jagannātha had become the state deity (*raṣṭradevatā*) of the powerful kingdom of Orissa. King Anaṅgabhīma III (1211-1238) and Bhānudeva II (1306-1328) in their inscriptions and in the *Mādaḷā Pāñji* were praised as *rāutta* ("viceroy") who were ruling Orissa under the *sāmrājya* (universal sovereignty) of Jagannātha.[16] The Mādaḷā Pāñji even describes how kings of these dynasties were legitimizing their tax collections and sometimes even their

---

[15] Bernard Cohn, Political Systems in the Eighteenth Century India: The Banaras Region, in: *Journal of American Oriental Society,* 82 (1962) 312-320.

[16] *Mādaḷā Pāñji*, ed. by A. Mohanti, Bhubaneswar, 2nd ed., 1969, pp. 28, 49.

actions against the priests of Puri with the "will" of Jagannātha.[17] This political-ideological aspect of the Jagannātha cult reached its culmination under the kings of the Sūryavaṃśa dynasty (1435-1540) who warned their opponents that any resistance against them would be a treacherous attack (*droha*) on Jagannātha. It is therefore not astonishing that the kings of the Gaṅga and Sūryavaṃśa dynasties seem to have "monopolized" the Jagannātha cult in their religious and political centres, that is, Puri and Cuttack. Despite the enormous building activities under both dynasties all over Orissa, up to the late 15th century we have definite proof of only one Jagannātha temple outside Puri - in Cuttack.

It is one of the least known but most striking facts in the development of the Jagannātha cult that only after the downfall of the central dynasty of Orissa the cult spread to the capitals of the Garhjat states in Orissa. In some of these cases the independence of local Garhjat states from the central Hindu power after 1568 coincided with the establishment of Jagannātha temples in their capitals. The spread of the cult in the Garhjat states and the construction of numerous Jagannātha temples in the hinterland therefore cannot be explained merely by religious developments particularly by Caitanya's influence. The sequence of events was: First, collapse of the central power which had "monopolized" the Jagannātha cult; second, the former rājās in the Garhjat states becoming independent; and third, the construction of Jagannātha temples in their new capitals. Under the Gaṅga and Sūryavaṃśa kings the Jagannātha cult had grown into a symbol of Hindu kingship and royal authority in Orissa. The construction of Jagannātha temples in the Garhjat states of Orissa (e.g. Mayurbhanj, Sambalpur and Keonjhar) therefore has to be regarded as a symbolic declaration of independence.

Most of the existing Jagannātha temples in the capitals of the Garhjat states of Orissa, however, were constructed during the

---

[17] D.C. Sircar, Two Lingaraja Temple Inscriptions, in: *Indian Culture*, 6 (1939/40), p. 72; D.C. Sircar, Gaṅga Bhānudeva II and Puruṣottama-Jagannātha, in: *JKHRS*, I (1946) 251-253; A.B. Mohanty (ed.), *Mādaḷā Pāñji*, p. 27.

British period, mainly in the second part of the 19th century.[18] Most remarkably, this activity is found in those princely states whose rājās constructed entirely new capitals with a new Jagannātha temple and palace at the centre (e.g. Daspalla, Khandpara, Baramba, Tigeria, Athgarh and Ranpur).[19] The construction of these "royal centres" meant an enormous tax burden and, up to about 1860, the use of forced labour (*beṭhi*). They indicate a definite change of the legitimation of these rājās in the tribal hinterland of Orissa. Up to the early 19th century the religious legitimation of most of these Garhjat Rājās was based on their position in the cult of their own tribal *ṭhakurāṇī*, which usually had become the dynastic family deity (*kuladevatā*) of their states (e.g., Bhāttarikā in Baramba and Maṇināgeśvarī in Ranpur). For centuries these ṭhakurāṇīs were a direct link between the Garhjat chiefs and the tribes. The patronage of these powerful goddesses secured for the kings the support of the tribes and thereby the safety of their states. In their constant wars with each other they depended on the goodwill of "their" tribes. During the Mughal and Maratha periods, Jagannātha temples in the Garhjat state were still of minor importance. They were symbols of political autonomy rather than an institution which influenced the legitimation and position of the rājā-chiefs *within* their own tribal society.

After the immediate danger from hostile neighbours had been removed by the "Pax Britannica", the cult of the tribal goddess appears to have slowly lost its central function in the ideology of Garhjat rulers. No longer depending on the voluntary support of the tribes, tribal or "feudal" loyalties became a burden for the rājās and an obstacle in their efforts to be recognized by the British Government and by other feudatory rājās all over India as full Hindu rājās. Therefore during the 19th century it was again the "Puri model" which influenced the feudatory rājās of Orissa. In Orissa the Rājās of Khurda-Puri were the most excellent example of how to substitute the loss of political power by religious

---

[18] After the confiscation of Banki and Angul in 1840 and 1848 respectively, 16 states remained which were recognized as the Feudatory States of Orissa. At least in 11 capitals of these states Jagannātha temples were constructed between ca. 1850 and 1930.

[19] For details see chapter 7.

authority. After the Khurda Rājās had lost their feudatory states to the Marathas in the second part of the 18th century, Mukunda Deva II was deprived of his Khurda territory after a futile revolt against the East India Company in 1804. Through Act IV of 1809, however, the superintendence of the Jagannātha temple was vested in the Rājās of Khurda who - since then being Rājās of Puri - in the following decades regained their leading position in the traditional hierarchy of Orissa. It was during this period that the Jagannātha cult again spread to the courts of the feudatory states of Orissa, whose rājās, too, had been deprived of actual political power.

Kṣatriyaization, as stated above, was initiated mainly by the authorities of the local level of the traditional political system. The model of Kṣatriyaization in Orissa was the leading Hindu power of the regional level, i.e. the Khurda dynasty, whose legitimation was derived from their status of being the successors of the Gajapatis of the Sūryavaṃśa dynasty (of the secondary level).[20] For sociologists it is not astonishing that this model was adopted on the local level only after their "declaration of independence" which had followed the downfall of the central Hindu dynasty of Orissa, i.e. after the distance, which had once separated the "imperial" rājās of the late Sūryavaṃśa from their sāmanta rājās in the hilly tribal areas of Orissa, was diminished. Under the kings of the great Hindu dynasties the adoption of their values, rites and status symbols was not only hindered through a policy of restriction (as seen in the case of Jagannātha temples outside the centre) but also through the social distance between the two levels.

This situation changed rapidly after the fall of the last Hindu dynasties in 1540-68 and the growing self-assurance of their former sāmanta rājās and tributary chiefs. The rājās of the great medieval dynasties had concentrated the symbols of their legitimation-ideology at their respective centres of their power. The Khurda

---

[20] After the conquest of Orissa by the Mughal army under the Rajput general Mān Singh, the "Rajput model" had become another model of Kṣatriyaization which has been dealt with by Surajit Sinha in his article on "Rajputization" (see above). In Orissa the Rajput model was particularly influential among the Bhanja dynasties and the Chauhans of Western Orissa. On their spurious genealogies see R.D. Banerji, Rajput Origins in Orissa, in: *Modern Review*, 43 (1928) 285-329 (partly reprinted in his *History of Orissa*, Calcutta 1931, vol. II, app. p. VI).

Rājās, however, having lost the actual power to "monopolize" these symbols, tried instead to gain support by "sharing" their position in the Jagannātha cult with their feudatory rājās and allies. Usually these rājās and chiefs were granted certain ritual privileges in the Jagannātha cult and privileges (e.g. status symbols like a royal *palaṅki*) during their visits to Puri. A sanad (charter) of Vīrakeśarī Deva (1737-1781/93) to the Rājā of Athagada in Southern Orissa is quite illustrative of how far the Khurda Rājās were allowing their feudatory rājās to "share" their position in the Jagannātha cult in order to survive politically: "As you have been engaged in a very difficult task in our favour, Bakṣi Hamīr Khān has been sent to Bānapur. You should join him and help him to accomplish the work entrusted to him on our behalf. Showing favour to you, we have appointed you as the Parīkṣa of the temple of Śrī Jagannātha."[21]

No doubt, the Khurda Rājās encouraged Kṣatriyaization "from above" by granting special rights and status symbols to khaṇḍāiat chiefs whose way of life often was that of a tribal chief rather than of a Hindu rājā.[22] But the usual way of transmission of Kṣatriya values, rites and status symbols etc. from the regional level to the local level was not "from above". Sometimes adoption (in the sense of Srinivas' Sanskritization) may have been more frequent. We have already mentioned the construction of Jagannātha temples in the Garhjat states immediately after the downfall of the central Hindu power, an evolution which has to be explained in terms of adoption of a status symbol which had been withheld by the central Hindu dynasty.

The adoption of status symbols which were no mere items (e.g. a royal umbrella) but social institutions like a Hindu temple or a Brahmin village (*agrahāra* or *śāsana*) initiated further Sanskritization both "from below" (adoption) and "above". The reason was to create a social context which is similar to the one to which the

---

[21] *Jagannātha Sthalavṛttāntam*, Ms. D. No. 2612. Government Oriental Manuscript Library, Madras (Descr. Cat. of Telugu Mss.). Translation by Dr. S.N. Rajaguru.

[22] T. Dalton, Notes of a Tour Made in 1863-64 in the Tributary Mehals under the Commissioner of Chota Nagpur, Bonai, Gangpore, Odeypore, and Sirgooja, in: *JASB*, 1865, pp. 1-31.

adopted social institution originally had belonged. In other words, adoption of royal status symbols, rites etc. by local chiefs has to be viewed as Kṣatriyaization "from below". But this process at the local Kṣatriya level promoted or even initiated Sanskritization in a much wider social and spatial context. The reason for this subsequent Sanskritization, as already mentioned, is the simple fact that a Hindu social institution, which was "imported" into a tribal area, required at least some sort of a Hindu social surrounding to enable this institution to survive in a tribal area. In the beginning, endowments granted by the local rājās enabled the temple and its priests to be economically "independent". But soon the expanding families of the Brahmin temple priests may have been economically forced to build up their own clientele in the tribal hinterland of the "royal" courts. This fact influenced both vertical social mobility of tribes "entering" the lower strata of Hindu castes and horizontal or spatial mobility.[23] Spatial mobility in tribal areas may have been promoted by Brahmins who encouraged Hindus to settle down in "their" area in order to enlarge their clientele. Even more important must have been the fact that in tribal areas Brahmins, in their own interest, tolerated or even encouraged vertical social mobility of tribal groups through Sanskritization by accepting invitations to perform certain rituals in tribal villages.[24] Thus, these Brahmins seem to have had a different attitude towards Sanskritization "from below". Whereas higher castes usually strongly opposed Sanskritization in order to maintain the *status quo,* Brahmins sometimes depended economically on the success of this type of social change.

---

[23] Burton Stein, Social Mobility and Medieval South Indian Hindu Sects, in: J. Silverberg (ed.), *Social Mobility in the Caste System in India, (Comparative Studies in Society and History,* Supplement III), 1968, pp. 78-94.

[24] Surajit Sinha, while writing on "Vaishnava Influence on a Tribal Culture" (in: Milton Singer (ed.), *Krishna, Myth, Rites and Attitudes,* Honolulu 1966, p. 72) describes a different aspect of this mechanism. It seems to have been most important for Sanskritization and to some extent for the spread of or even creation of castes in tribal areas: "The Vaishnava gurus are ... not concerned with replacing the traditional rituals of their clients; they are mainly interested in superimposing a few rituals of their own in order to make their presence as ritual specialists essential in the life of the Bhumij (tribe). The Vaishnava guru is not moved by a reformist's zeal to save the heathen souls of his clients but he is very much interested in increasing the number of his clientele."

And as has been shown elsewhere,[25] Kṣatriyaization caused yet another mode of vertical social mobility. The status of the tribal priests of the originally purely tribal tutelary deities of these Garhjat chiefs was raised during the process of Hinduization of these deities.

These examples clearly show the existence of a type of social change which was initiated through the social and ritual requirements of local rājās or chiefs. It usually followed the Kṣatriya model of the regional rājā. It caused a wide range of social change which, however, was not the original intention of its initiators. As it was initiated by local chiefs and rājās and as it followed the "Kṣatriya model" of the regional rājās, this type of social change has been called Kṣatriyaization in preference to Sanskritization.

---

[25] For details see the article on the *iṣṭadevatās* in the present volume.

LEGITIMATION AND TOWNPLANNING IN THE FEUDATORY STATES OF CENTRAL ORISSA

I. Legitimation at the Hindu Tribal Frontier

It is well known that in India architecture and townplanning are based on transcendental patterns of the primeval cosmic order. Besides myth and ritual, architecture is the most important medium to "re-present" this cosmic order and to reconcile it with the consequences of creation which originated from the destruction of primeval unity. This transcendental notion is expressed particularly in the orientation of buildings and towns and in the assignment, and sometimes restriction, of social groups and their activities to certain directions and areas in this ritual space.

The ritual space of towns, however, was determined also by various geographic, economic, social and political forces and the endeavour to accommodate and integrate them into an ideal concept of this space. Recent research, for example, has shown the vital importance of processions and circumambulations to re-establish and maintain ritual unity and harmony between divergent social forces and different places.[1] The topographical pattern evolving from these ritual paths *(Ritualwege)* tends to confirm the cosmic norms and responsibility of the traditional township.

The present paper throws some light on another ritual aspect which considerably influenced townplanning and urban space in a specific type of town, i.e. the capital as seat of a court *(Residenzstadt)*. Capitals, particularly in a traditional society, played a vital role for the legitimacy of political power, being the major, or even the only stage where political legitimation was continuously dis-

---

[1] See for instance B. Kölver, Hinduistische Ritualwege als Ordnungssystem, in: *Urban Space and Ritual. Proceedings of an International Symposion on Urban History of South and East Asia*, ed. by N. Gutschow, Darmstadt 1977, pp. 51-57; R. Herdick, Stadt und Ritual am Beispiel der Newarstadt Kirtipur, in: *idem*, pp. 17-25; N. Gutschow, Functions of Squares in Bhaktapur, in: *Ritual Space in India. Studies in Architectural Anthropology*, ed. by J. Pieper, London 1980, pp. 57-64 (= *aarp*, vol. 17).

played. Although a capital in a traditional society had mainly fortificatory and to a limited extent administrative and economic functions, legitimation of political power through ritual means also played an important role both in modelling the town plan and in its "non-material" function within the society. This role of the capital is quite obvious in states emerging from a tribal society under the impact of a new concept of kingship, as has been the case in many princely states which have peopled the hinterland of the great regional Hindu kingdom throughout India's history.[2]

In the Hindu tribal frontier area, legitimacy of political power had a twofold aspect - internal (or vertical) and external (or horizontal). The impact of the new kingship, which led to social change and class-oriented stratification in a previously equalitarian society, the appropriation of the surplus by the king and his retinue and the king's divine affiliation, ascribed to him by "foreign" Brahmanical norms rather than by tribal consensus, required special means of legitimation to win and maintain the loyalty and compliance of social groups within the territory. Remote Hindu courts depended upon the loyalty of surrounding tribes for their survival. At the Hindu tribal frontier, which often crisscrossed the territory of the great Hindu kingdoms, political power was based largely on the establishment of an internal or vertical legitimation vis-á-vis the tribes. On the other hand, the recognition of these princedoms by neighbouring Hindu states - an "external" legitimation of vital importance in marriage alliances, for example - required certain paraphernalia of Hindu royalty. Most important in this regard were Hindu temples and the settlement of Brahmins in the capital and its neighbourhood.

The small c^pitals of the former feudatory states in the hinterland of central Orissa provide excellent examples of this twofold legitimation and its display. As will be shown below, in most of these capitals townplanning follows a particular pattern of ritual

---

[2] The development of ancient Java with its *kraton* culture represents a very similar picture. See van Naerssen, F.H.; Some Aspects of the Hindu-Javanese Kraton, in: *Journal of the Oriental Society of Australia*, 2, (1963) and van Naerssen, F.H. and de Jongh, R.C., *The Economic and Administrative History of Early Indonesia*, Leiden 1977, p. 36 ff (see below chapter 15).

development corresponding to four stages of political development with specific needs of legitimation.

II. Historical Background

The early history of central Orissa is known since the 3rd century B.C., when Tosali (near Bhubaneswar) became the seat of a provincial capital under emperor Asoka. In the late first century B.C. Kalinganagara became the capital under the Orissan emperor Khāravela. The formation of local states in the hinterland, however, began only much later. Eighteen "jungle states" *(aṭavi-rājya)* of south Tosali and Hinduized tribal deities like Maṇināgeś-varī are first mentioned in the 6th century A.D.[3] Most of the later feudatory states in the hilly tribal hinterland of coastal Orissa seem to have come into prominence only in the 15th century when the Hindu kingdom of Orissa reached its peak under the powerful Gajapati dynasty. The Gajapatis encircled their fertile coastal granary and their political and religious centres, Cuttack and Puri, by a large number of feudatory states which bore the significant name *gaḍajāta*, meaning "born from the fort" *(gaḍa)*. Several decades after the downfall of the Gajapatis in the year 1568, the Mughals assigned the small Garhjat (= *Gaḍajāta)* states of central Orissa to the Rājās of Khurda who had meanwhile become the local successors to the imperial Gajapatis. Under the Khurda Rājās, the Garhjat states achieved a semi-autonomous status which they retained even when the Marathas conquered Orissa in 1751. When the British conquered Orissa in 1803, the autonomy of the Garhjat states also received imperial sanction when the East India Company acknowledged them for a quit-rent as their allied feudatories.

During the British period, the Garhjat states underwent a slow but far-reaching change. Previously the Garhjat chiefs had to refrain from exploiting their people beyond a certain limit because they depended on their loyalty and support. Under the "Pax Britanica", however, which protected chiefs against attacks from their neighbours and saved them from rebellious subjects, regular taxation and forms of modern administration were introduced with

---

[3] Sircar, D.C.; Two Plates from Kanas in: *EI,* XXVIII, pp. 328-34.

the help of British advisers. The beneficiaries of this change were almost exclusively the Garhjat chiefs. With a few "enlightened" exceptions, they used the changed political situation and new economic measures to establish themselves and become recognized as full Hindu rājās both within their own society and by the British government. Their main interests were the enlargement and embellishment of their palaces and capitals.

III. Religious Background[4]

Orissa is one of the great cultural regions of India; its magnificent temples at Bhubaneswar, Puri and Konarak are world-famous. One outstanding characteristic of the region is the persistence of its religions which form an uninterrupted continuum in which tribal and village cults are linked with the highest manifestations of the all-Indian Brahmanical culture. This continuum integrates several levels which overlap without clear lines of demarcation.

The cult of Jagannātha, itself an intricate blending of tribal and Brahmanical traditions, is the pivot at the centre of the Orissan tradition. Puri, the eastern *maṭha* of India's four main *maṭhas* (monasteries) which allegedly were founded at the country's four cardinal points by the great reformer Śaṅkarācarya in the early 9th century,[5] forms an integral part of the great all-Indian tradition.[6] Its position as one of the holiest places of India was further enhanced when Jagannātha was worshipped as Lord Kriṣṇa by the great Vaiṣṇava reformer Caitanya and his followers in the early 16th century.

At a regional level, Jagannātha is the main god among the major "Five Deities" *(pañcadevatā)* of Orissa. These deities consists of Śiva-Liṅgarāja in Bhubaneswar, Durgā-Virajā at Jajpur, Jagannātha-Viṣṇu at Puri, Sūrya at Konarak and Ganeśa-Mahāvināyaka at the foot of a hill with the same name in northern Orissa. These

---

[4] For details see the preceding article on tribal deities.

[5] This tradition meanwhile has been questioned, see below chapter 12.

[6] Lütt, J.; The Śaṅkarācārya of Puri, in: *CJ*, pp. 411-19.

comprise Orissa's major Hindu "sects". Mahāvināyaka, with a great flat unhewn stone as cult idol, seems to represent in particular the aspect of tribal and village deities among the *pañcadevatās,* although the iconography of the cult images of Liṅgarāja and Jagannātha also reveals a pre-Brahmanic origin. The regional importance of Jagannātha increased considerably after the Gajapati kings ("Lords of the Elephants") recognized him ("the Lord of the Universe") as the state deity *(rāṣṭradevatā)* and supreme overlord of Orissa and claimed to rule as his sons *(putra)* under his divine orders. Virajā at Jajpur and Liṅgarāja had been the tutelary deities of former Orissan ruling dynasties (Bhauma Karas and Somavaṃśa respectively) whereas Śurya was the personal or *iṣṭedevatā* of the powerful builder of Konarak, King Narasiṃha I. On the regional level, the *pañcadevatās* thus represent the royal deities of the great regional Hindu kingdoms.

Jagannātha, as the *rāṣṭradevatā* of Orissa par excellence, is directly linked with the deities of the subregional level, most aptly represented by the powerful "Eight Mother Goddesses" *(aṣṭamātṛkā)* of Orissa: Bhagavati in Banpur (Ganjam district, south Orissa), Maṇināgeśvarī in Ranpur, Cārcikā in Banki, Bhāṭṭarikā near Baramba, Hiṅgulā near Talcher and Śaralā at Jhankada (all central Orissa), Virajā at Jajpur (at the border towards north Orissa) and Samalāī in Sambalpur (in western Orissa).[7] According to the still prevailing tradition the "Eight Mother Goddesses" form the pegs of a tent with Jagannātha as the main tent pole.[8]

The mention of the goddess Samalāī makes it clear that this concept of *aṣṭamātṛkās* in its existing form came into prominence in Orissa only after the downfall of the Gajapati kingdom in 1568, when old feudatory states achieved a semi-autonomous status and

---

[7] Sometimes Vimalā of Puri or Tārā Tāriṇī near Aska in the Ganjam District are also included in other lists.

[8] Radhanatha Ray, the most famous Oriya poet of his time, introduced in his famous *Mahākāvya Mahājātrā* (1892) the describtion of the *puśpābhiṣeka*, the annual coronation ceremony of Lord Jagannātha during which he is visited by the following subregional deities: Haricaṇḍī from the Chilka sea lake, Bhubaneśvarī from Bhubaneswar, Bāruṇeī from Khurda, Caṇḍikā from Devidvara, Caṇḍī from Cuttack, Mahāmaṅgalā from Kakatpur, Kālījayī from Chilka lake and Sūrya the Sungod of Konarak, furthermore Bhagavatī, Maṇināgeśvarī, Cārccikā and Śaralā (mentioned already among the *aṣṭamātrikās)*. See Dash, G.N.; Jagannātha and Oriya Nationalism, in: *CJ*, p. 369.

new ones were founded, e.g. Sambalpur whose rājās acknowledged the previously unknown goddess Samalāī as their *iṣṭadevi*. Whereas the *pañcadevatās* had been linked with the former great Hindu kingdoms of Orissa, most of the *aṣṭamātṛkās* were associated with the feudatory states which rose on the ruins of these kingdoms. Bhagavatī, Maṇināgeśvarī, Cārcikā, Bhāṭṭṭarikā, Hiṅgulā and Samalāī, until recently, were all *kuladevatās* ("family deities") of important though small feudatory dynasties (Parikhud, Ranpur, Banki, Baramba, Talcher and Sambalpur). Śaralā at Jhankada and Virajā at Jajpur as the only exceptions are situated in the coastal "Mughulbandi" which was under the direct rule of the Mughals without intermediatory Hindu rājās.

The main characteristic of these *aṣṭamātṛkās* is the extension and recognition of their power beyond their immediate surroundings. During the main festivals they attract devotees from a considerable area ranging between subdivisional and district levels.[9] Although all are fully recognized as Hindu deities, the main iconographic feature of these *aṣṭamātṛkās* is their undeniable association with pre-Brahmanical tribal cults. They are housed in sometimes quite impressive Hindu temples (e.g. Bhāṭṭarikā), but still worshipped in aniconical (e.g. Maṇināgeśvarī) or slightly anthropomophized symbols (e.g. Samalāī) by their non-Brahmin priests (e.g. Malli priests of Bhāṭṭarikā). But wherever one of these *iṣṭadevatās* is recognized as the tutelary deity by a chieftain or small rājā, a substitute in the form of a "mobile image" *(calantī pratimā)* in pure Hindu iconography is worshipped in the palace shrine exclusively by the rājā and his court Brahmin *(rājaguru)*. The original deity, usually much older than the princely dynasties, remains outside the palace and even the capital. Samalāī, powerful though newly "created" by the first Sambalpur rājā, is the only exception to this rule. The *iṣṭadevatās* are visited by the rājās and their *rājagurus* during important festivals (coronation, Durgāpūjā etc.). Whether on these occasions the *rājaguru* takes over the *pūjā* or the non-Brahmin priests still perform the rituals is an indication of the power of the former tribal deity vis-á-vis the rājā. In any

---

9 James Preston, Sacred Centres and Symbolic Networks in India. Paper read at the Xth Int.Congr.Anthrop. and Ethn.Sciences, Dec. 1978, Delhi.

case the royal visit of these powerful goddesses plays an important role, indicating the ritual space of the capital and its surroundings.

The local level is represented by the numerous village deities (*grāma-devatās*) which are least known but most important in village daily life. Contrary to the mother goddesses of subregional importance, the village goddesses are not yet housed in temples and their power is confined by the borders of their respective villages. Most of the above mentioned feudatory states included in their courtly pantheon deities belonging to the village and non-Hinduized tribal deities. The legends of origin of many feudatory states mention the human sacrifice of an inhabitant of the respective locality during the foundation of the fort. Examples are the woman Śabaruṇī in Baramba, the Khond chiefs Nara and Poro in Narsingpur, the Saora chief Śabara in Dheṅkanal, a Bauri woman in Nayagarh and Dhobei Guru in Banki. The heads of these victims, which were in some cases the owner of the place, were worshipped as the first *iṣṭadevatās* of the new chiefs. Although these "martyr-*iṣṭadevatās*" soon lost their privileged position to the more powerful mother goddesses which became the main *iṣṭadevatās* (wherever they were available for a raj family), the victims were worshipped outside the palaces in small shrines once or twice a year.

In a few feudatory states, another type of local deity was included in the royal pantheon as a "subsidiary *iṣṭadevatā*". This usually happened after a successful war. In Baramba, the rājā defeated the chief of the neighbouring fort Kharod with the help of the goddess Mahākālī of Kharod and in Ranpur the rājā regained his throne only with the help of the goddess Khila Mundā and her tribe with whom he had taken refuge. So Mahākālī of Kharod is visited once a year by the Rājā of Baramba, and Khila Muṇḍā, together with her tribal priest, comes once a year during Durgāpūjā to the palace of Ranpur.

As already mentioned, the four levels from village deity to one of all-India significance are closely interlinked through various channels and broad overlaps. Jagannātha, for instance, is fully integrated into the all-India level although it is India's regional deity par excellence and still bears traces of features characteristic of deities at the subregional level. Virajā belongs to the regional *pañcadevatās* of Orissa, to the *aṣṭamātṛkās* at the subregional level, and is worshipped at one of India's main places of Śākta worship

(śaktapīṭha).[10] Apart from the sungod Sūrya in Konarak, which is certainly no indigenous deity, these deities originate in their present locality at the local level. Most of their differences (and there are more similarities than differences!) can be attributed to the process of Hinduization, its duration and intensity, which usually depended on historical coincidence and geographic proximity to political and religious centres. In any case, the process of Hinduization was usually less a change at the cost of something than an enlargement and enrichment of the existing cult.

IV. Legitimation and Townplanning

The legitimation of Hindu rājās was linked to and dependent on the political development and the religious context in which it took place. Legitimation had therefore a direct impact on townplanning particularly in the feudatory states of Orissa. The following discussion will attempt to define an "ideal type" of the small capital which developed in these feudatory states.

1. Legitimation at the local level: the martyr-*iṣṭadevatā* and the foundation of the fort

Although parts of the mountainous hinterland of the Mahanadi delta have been under the direct influence of the Hindu culture of coastal kingdoms for several centuries, the history of the Garhjat states seems to have begun on a local level and often in tribal surroundings. Whether the first chiefs were tribal members or entered its territory as freebooters, they all depended initially on the toleration and, if possible, the loyalty and support of the tribe. A major way to enhance the legitimacy of the newly established rule in its immediate surroundings seems to have been the recognition of a local deity directly - or rather physically - linked with the tribe and the rural population. Mention has been made of the primeval tutelary deities, many of them martyr-*iṣṭadevatās* who allegedly offered their heads to the first chiefs under the condition that they should be worshipped as *iṣṭadevatā*. They usually bore

---

[10] Sircar, D.C., *The Śakta Pīṭhas*, 1973.

the name of a local tribe or caste, e.g. the Śabara (Saora), Khond and Bauri tribes and the Dhobi (washermen) and Kaivarta (fishermen) castes. The stones, symbolizing the heads of the martyr-*iṣṭadevatās*, were usually worshipped within the fort near the palace or near the mudwalls of the fort (e.g. Śabara Dheṅka Muṇḍa in Dhenkanal).

The ideal topograhpy of an early Garhjat capital in its initial phase is derived from archaeological evidence and the detailed legendary accounts *(rājavaṃśa-itihāsa)* of the raj families. Most of the early forts of the Garhjat states were situated at the edge of a valley or plain with natural irrigation and backed against the foot of a hill.[11] In a few cases, they were even entrenched in a pocket surrounded on three sides by hills covered with impassable jungle. Athagarh in the Ganjam district is an excellent example of this topography and its advantages for fortification. The people on whose products the fort depended lived outside the fort, their villages often being separated from it by thick jungles. Beside defence, the topography of these early forts had a twofold function. At the same time it had to provide easy access to the villages in the plain and to their production as well as defence for the court and, in times of war, a refuge for the villagers and their cattle.

The ritual link between the new rulers and the ruled was provided by the martyr-*iṣṭadevatās*. The locally confined power required legitimation only through a local deity. "External" legitimization seems to have played no significant role during this early phase.

2. Legitimation on the subregional level: the great goddess outside the fort

Ritual space and legitimation of the new power was linked to the extension of political power. During its spread into the higher mountainous hinterland or lower valleys, the self-styled rājās often came across already existing and more important indigenous goddesses which commanded a strong influence and hold over the population of a larger area. Whether these goddesses were already

---

[11] For example Ranpur, Nayagarh, Narsinghpur, Baramba, Tigeria, Dhenkanal, Khurda, Keonjhar. Only a few forts were situated near the Mahanadi river (Athgarh, Banki) and at the Brahmani (Talcher).

accorded subregional status or whether the future patronage of the rājās was essential in finally establishing this position, the rājās accepted them as the new *iṣṭadevatās*. They donated land for the maintenance of their priests and rituals and in all cases they either built, or considerably enlarged, temples for the new tutelary deities. In course of time, they always became the most important Hindu temples of their respective sub-regions, even when older and more impressive structures existed in their neighbourhood.

The inclusion of a subregional goddess into the pantheon of the Garhjat state enlarged its ritual space and enhanced the legitimation of the chief. In some cases, however, this extension of ritual influence through control over the cult of an important goddess involved the rājā in a power struggle with neighbouring chiefs. The chief of Kharod in the neighbourhood of Baramba, for instance, lost "his" goddess Mahākālī and his rule to a Rājā of Baramba who then acknowledged the goddess as a subsidiary tutelary deity. The Rājās of Baramba kept one of their royal swords at her place and visited her once a year during Durgāpūjā. But the Rājās of Baramba had to share the even more powerful goddess Bhāṭṭarikā, which meanwhile had become their *iṣṭadevatā*, with three neighbouring chiefs (Narsinghpur, Tigeria and Nayagarh) who held the privilege of performing their own worship *(pūjā)* on special days during Durgāpūjā. In the course of political development and under the influence of Hinduization,[12] all the rājās who worshipped one of the powerful goddesses of Orissa as their tutelary deities had a brass or gold image of this goddess set up in their palace for their daily worship. Whereas the aniconical "image" remained at its place of origin and continued to be worshipped by the non-Brahmin priests, the new figure - usually in the form of Durgā - was worshipped in the palace exclusively by the Brahmin *rājaguru* and the king.

At this second stage of development, ritual space was influenced by political circumstance. Inside the fort it centred around the brass image of the main tutelary deity and the still-existing martyr-*iṣṭadevatā* and, outside the fort, around the great godddess and, in some cases, around a subsidiary *iṣṭadevatā*. During this period the

[12] Eschmann, A., Hinduization of Tribal Deities in Orissa: The Śakta and Śaiva Typology, in: *CJ*, pp. 79-98.

pivot of this ritual network clearly lay outside the fort in the place of the great goddess. She was the sacred ruler of her territory: the feudatory state of Badamba, for instance, got its name from Bhāṭṭarikā, the "Great Mother" *(baḍa-ambā)*. The rājā participated in her rituals and derived his legitimation by acknowledging her as tutelary deity. It is obvious that the "urban" space of the early forts and their "palaces", though included in the ritual system, were little influenced by it.

3. Legitimation at the regional level: the Hindu temple and the new township

More systematic townplanning in accordance with the above mentioned pattern of transcendental values began with the construction of larger Hindu temples, representing a further stage of Hinduization and consolidation of political power. Construction of a Hindu temple in the tribal hinterland, in contrast to the more developed coastal areas, was much more than an architectural event. It required the invitation and at least temporary settlement of new craftsmen and the permanent settlement of Brahmin priests in its surroundings. In the tribal areas, particularly in the case of the future capitals of the Garhjat states, the Hindu temple became the nucleus of the new township. In most cases the new temple was constructed outside the fort, not only for want of space inside. It was also a question of security, because the many devotees of the cult, especially during its great festivals, were difficult to control.

Since the new township was mainly for the accommodation of the new temple and its priests, the execution of the similarly imported concept of townplanning according to Hindu *śastras* was more feasible than in towns which had been growing for centuries. In the new township, the strict axial orientation of the new temple towards the west had in most cases a direct impact on townplanning, at least on the orientation of the streets nearby. The settlement of the priests in special wards near the temple, the construction of their houses according to strict rules and the allotment of separate prescribed districts to different castes, by that time a decisive factor in society, gave the township a new aspect and hitherto unknown dimension of cosmic orientation.

The former tribal chiefs thus emerged as Hindu rājās. Complete political independence was not essential for acquiring this status. On the contrary, most of the feudatory states in central Orissa seem to have reached this level of development under the Mughals, who had assigned them in the late 16th century to the Rājās of Khurda, who were in turn subject to the Mughal Governors of Orissa. But the example of the Khurda Rājās, who, as guardians of the Jagannātha temple in Puri, compensated for political weakness with ritual power, might have quickened this process.

The construction of the Hindu temple near the fort and the consequent development of a township around it had a great impact on the feudatory state. It introduced a new external element which greatly influenced both urban space and the ritual pattern of the state as a whole, since it brought the centre of ritual gravity nearer to the palace. It would be wrong, however, to assume that the construction of the Hindu temple immediately weakened the dominant position of the former tribal goddess outside the township. The constant quarrels and skirmishes among the feudatory states during Mughal and Maratha rule kept the rājās in permanent dependence on their tribal and rural populations. In order to keep tribal loyalty and support, patronage of their great goddess and her cult was still most essential for internal or vertical legitimation. In this situation, the Hindu temple, as symbol of a new Hindu kingship, was still the main source of external or horizontal legitimation rather than of any great significance for the political status of the rājās within the society.

4. The second palace near the Hindu temple in the township

A decisive new stage in the development of royal legitimation and townplanning came when a rājā gave up his old palace inside the fort and constructed a new palace in the township itself. The reason for this step was usually want of space for further development inside the fort and - perhaps even more troublesome - the heat at the foot of the hill. To give up the protection of the fort and the cover of the nearby hills, however, required a considerable change either in the military strength of the rājā himself or in the overall political situation. Often, therefore, this step did not take

place until early in the British rule, when fights among the feudatory chiefs had nearly ceased.

In most cases these new palaces were constructed in the immediate vicinity of the great Hindu temple, as if the rājās who gave up the protection of the fort took shelter in the shade of the Hindu temple. A good example is provided by Ranpur. Its early fort was situated right at the foot of the steep Maninaga hill, on the top of which Maṇināgeśvarī, one of the "Eight Mothers", resides. Where fort and hill once met, the Tala Maṇināga Durga Mandira or "fort temple of the ground Maṇināga" is still situated. Together with the hardly accessible original shrine of the goddess on top of the hill and the tribal goddess Khila Muṇḍā, which visits the palace once a year, this "fort temple" *(durga mandira)* formed the main source of religious legitimation. Social integration was the main idea behind this ritual policy.

After some generations the need for external legitimation and recognition by other Hindu rājās began to change the pattern of legitimation in Ranpur. Its rājās were the first among the chiefs of the Garhjat states of central Orissa to construct their own Jagannātha temple in their capital outside the fort. According to local tradition this happened in the early sixteenth century when King Pratāprudra Deva ruled in Orissa. About two centuries later, in the middle of the 18th century, the Rājās of Khurda/Puri were involved in a desperate struggle for survival against the Muslim governors and, after 1751, the Marathas - and sometimes even against their own rebellious feudatory rājās. The main "weapon" of the Khurda Rājās during this time was their control over the Jagannātha cult at Puri. They systematically ensured the support of their feudatory rājās by issuing "royal letters" *(chāmu ciṭāu)* which granted these rājās special privileges in the Jagannātha cult at Puri. The Rājās of Ranpur received several of these "royal letters" which enhanced their status considerably.

It was during this period of political turmoil and struggle for control over the Jagannātha temple at Puri that a Rājā of Ranpur constructed a new and impressive palace just to the north of "his" Jagannātha temple. It is most revealing that, according to the

History of the Royal Dynasty of Ranpur[13], this same rājā had also constructed three temple cars and institutionalized in Ranpur the car festival *(ratha yātrā)* of the "Lord of the World" as it is performed in Puri. Nothing could better illustrate the importance of the Jagannātha cult and its car festival in legitimizing Hindu kingship in Orissa. The royal participation in the car festival helped to proclaim the new idea of Hindu kingship to the rural and tribal population. Furthermore, it elevated the feudatory rājās to a level next only to the Rājās of Khurda/Puri who claimed to be the legitimate successors to the imperial Gajapatis.[14]

At this point of development the significance of the Hindu temple in the legitimation of political power began to change. It had been a royal status symbol of external legitimacy with little implication for the relationship between the rājās and the rural population. Now the participation of the *rājā* and his *prajā* (people) in the car festivals increasingly influenced internal or vertical legitimation, too. The Hindu god and its temple cult, though not yet dominating the religious life of the feudatory state, began to overshadow the Great Goddess and her cult perfomed by non-Brahmin priests.

The new idea of Hindu kingship was most significantly expressed in townplanning. The performance of the car festival required a "grand road" *(baḍa daṇḍa)* leading straight from the Jagannātha temple to a smaller temple called Guṇḍicā. This model originated in Puri, where the yearly car festival (most probably) celebrates the return of Lord Jagannātha to his original place near the Guṇḍicā temple.[15] Whereas in South Indian car festivals the temple cars are drawn through rectangular "car streets" which surround the great temple complex, in Puri the three cars of Jagannātha and his divine brother and sister, Balabhadra and Subhadrā, are drawn straight from the main temple to the divine "summer residence" about three

---

[13] Damodar Singh Deo, *Rānapura Rājavaṃśa Itihāsa*, Ms. 1962, p. 33.

[14] For a very similar model of sociopolitical change through ritual and ideolo; ,cal innovations see S. Sinha, State Formation and Rajput Myth in Tribal Central India, in: *Man in India*, 42 (1962) 35-80.

[15] Geib, R., *Die Indradyumna-Legende. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Jagannātha-Kultes*, Wiesbaden 1975.

km away. The town plan of the "Jagannātha temple towns", therefore, is characterized by a single main road oriented, theoretically at least, along the north-south axis because it begins in a right angle to the Jagannātha temple which has an east-west orientation.[16]

Ranpur, with its clear axial orientation, provides an excellent example of this townplanning. Situated on the eastern slope of the Maninaga hill which extends exactly north-south, Ranpur's main street leads north, whereas the second axial street begins in front of the Jagannātha temple and leads east. The marketplace and a few small Hindu temples of the 19th and early 20th centuries are situated on both sides of the *baḍa-daṇḍa*. The other main street opposite the Jagannātha temple is surrounded by the houses of Brahmins. In its centre a small but beautiful enshrined figure of Durgā is worshipped by the Brahmins as the "Sahi (ward) Maṇināgeśvarī". In Ranpur, legitimation and townplanning thus developed in a way which closely approximated the "ideal type" of a princely capital in the Orissan feudatory states.

Ranpur is situated near a steep hill on the top of which one of the oldest and most venerated indigenous goddesses of Orissa is worshipped. Once a year another indigenous goddess, Khilā Muṇḍā, together with her non-Brahmin priests, visits the new palace, symbolizing the rājā's continuing relationship with the tribes in the hinterland. This preexisting ritual structure has been superimposed by a new pattern of Hindu townplanning with the Jagannātha temple at the centre of its axial streets. This new centre of ritual gravity induced the rājās to build their new palace just north of it, thus enabling the "Lord of the World" in his temple car to pass in front of the palace once a year on his way to his "summer residence". The old ritual structure of legitimation and the new pattern of townplanning around the Hindu temple were linked and enhanced at the same time by the introduction of two

16 In reality the *baḍa daṇḍa* of Puri does not lead north but north-east due to the geographical position of the Guṇḍīca temple. The "continuation" of the *baḍa daṇḍā*, however, which leads as *svarga-dvāra* ("gate to heaven") to the cremation places at the ocean, has a clear north-south orientation.

new legends.[17] The round flat stone idol of the goddess Maṇinā-geśvarī was interpreted as the former pedestal of Lord Jagannātha before his installation at Puri and the Rājās of Ranpur claimed to be the direct descendants of Viśvabasu, the legendary chief of the Śabara tribe and the first devotee of Lord Jagannātha.

5. The Jagannātha temple and the new capitals

The impact of the kingship ideology of the Jagannātha cult on townplanning in the feudatory states of Orissa reached its zenith during the heyday of the British Raj in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Twelve Garhjat states of central Orissa were recognized as feudatory states by the East India Company in the early 19th century; in nine capitals during this period new Jagannātha temples were built in the immediate vicinity of the palace.[18] Two states (Banki and Angul) were confiscated before the Jagannātha wave had reached them (1840-48), and Ranpur already possessed a Jagannātha temple. In several states completely new capitals were built in the neighbourhood of the old forts. The town plan of all these new capitals gave the most prominent space to the palace and the Jagannātha temple. Most impressive is the ideology of this political architecture in those cases where palace and temple formed a single complex. Whereas in the early example of Ranpur temple and palace had still been separated by a big wall, these new temple-palace complexes formed a clear architectural unity surrounded by a single wall. They are either situated at the main street which leads to the Guṇḍicā temple (e.g. Daspalla) or - most impressively - the street even starts in front of them (Baramba, Tigeria, Khandpara).

The unification of palace and temple within a single compound marked the culmination of the new ideology of Hindu kingship. It placed the rājā next to the "Lord of the World" in the centre of the

[17] Singh, G.N., *Final Report on the Survey and Settlement Operations of the Ranpur Ex-State* (1943-1952), Berhampur 1963, p. 20f, and *Rāṇapuradurga Rājavaṃśānukrāmaṇi*, by Lingaraj Sarangi, Ms. 1962, p. 1f.

[18] Nayagarh, Khandpara, Daspalla, Narsingpur, Baramba, Tigeria, Athgarh, Dhenkanal, Hindul. In Dhenkanal and Keonjhar the Baladeva temple was of greater importance.

town which in turn is the centre of the state and, finally, the cosmos. The Hindu temples were instrumental both in establishing and legitimizing this new order.

It is interesting to look at the political circumstances under which this development took place in the feudatory states. In Baramba, for instance, Rājā Gopināth Maṅgarāj Mahāpātra (1831-57) constructed a Gopinātha (Kriṣṇa) temple as the first major Hindu temple near the recently built palace. At the same time he introduced 22 services *(sevā)* for the temple and 22 taxes and services for the maintenance of the king and his palace (e.g. taxes for fishing and boating on the nearby Mahanadi river, for cutting wood and for receiving blessings from the rājā); furthermore *beṭhi* or forced labour was introduced.[19] Whether intended or not, the reason behind the construction of Hindu temples and the introduction of new taxes is obvious. Together with other feudatory chiefs, Gopinath's son was officially recognized by the British Government as "Rājā" in 1874 and his grandson Vishvāmbhara (1882-1922) received a new imperial *sanad* in 1894.[20] It was Vishvāmbhara who built a new Jagannātha temple near the old palace in the same compound. The *baḍa daṇḍa* now began right in front of the new palace!

Several other rulers of Garhjat states who had received the title of a rājā and the new imperial *sanad* in 1894 also constructed new capitals with Jagannātha temples at their centre (Athagarh, Khandpara). The official recognition of the former chiefs as rājās by the Imperial Government thus seems to have further motivated new and expensive townplanning. Since the Muslims had only called the chiefs *zamindars* and the Khurda Rājās addressed them as *khaṇḍāitas* ("military chiefs"), the recognition as rājās by the Imperial Government enhanced their status considerably.

It is interesting to note that in the Garhjat states the period of greatest influence of Hindu temples on townplanning coincided with a period of utmost military weakness and political decline. In a way the underlying concept of making royalty divine, as

---

[19] *Baḍāmba Rājavaṃśa Itihāsa,* Ms, p. 30f.

[20] In 1874 all feudatory chiefs of Orissa received the title "Rajah". Aitchison, C.U., *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sanads,* 4th ed., Calcutta 1904, Vol. I, p. 318f.

indicated in the townplanning, seems to have served as a compensation for the loss of active participation in power struggles and conquests, the main *dharma* of a Hindu rājā. On the other hand, due to the "Pax Britannica", the late 19th and early 20th centuries were hey-days of economic and social exploitation by the feudatory rājās when a number of oppressive taxes were introduced. But it would be wrong to assume that the construction of the new great temples was the main reason for the exploitation of the countryside. It seems more likely that another important reason for the great number of Hindu temples in and near the capitals was the need to legitimize the rājā's appropriation of village surplus, a new practice required to satisfy the increasing demands of the court and its vast retinue. Patronage of the early shrines of tribal goddesses with their aniconic idols outside the capitals (not to speak of the poor martyr-*iṣṭadevatās*) was no longer suitable to legitimize the splendour of the new Hindu kings. "Royalization" of the Hindu gods, with their numerous paraphernalia, their large temples, vast landed property and treasure, made these gods the best justification for the splendour of their earthly representative who, after all, had to "represent" the greatness of their divine overlords.

That legitimation was still vitally important for the new rājās of Orissa is attested by serious uprisings of the rural population and tribes in several feudatory states, e.g. Nayagarh, Keonjhar and Ranpur, during the second half of the 19th century. The main targets of these uprisings were the new modes of taxation, various special contributions, forced labour *(beṭhi)* and "the supremacy of those who resided in the capital".[21]

6. Imperial legitimation: the new palaces near the "station"

The temple-palace complex as town centre, however, was not the final development of townplanning in the capitals of the feudatory states of Orissa. A few rājās went a step further. During the 1930's and 40's, they began to construct completely new palaces (e.g.

---

[21] *Rānapura Rājabaṃśa Itihāsa*, by Damodar Singh Deo, 1971, Ms., p. 53. On 5th January 1939, during an agitation in Ranpur against special taxes on fruit and fish and against forced labour, the Political Agent Major Bazellgate was killed (*Settlement Report of the Ranpur Ex-State Area, 1943-1952*, prep. by G.N. Singh, Berhampur 1963, p. 30).

Athgarh, Nayagarh, Dhenkanal, Keonjhar). In Nayagarh and Athgarh the rājās decided to build new palaces in a purely European style after extensive travels in Europe. These were built outside the township which had grown around the old palaces and the main Hindu temples during the preceding decades.

The location of these new palaces was determined by a new political force which had meanwhile developed outside the old townships, consisting of a conglomeration of buildings and offices directly or indirectly linked with the Imperial British Government of India and its provincial administration: examples are jail, police station, *dak* or post bungalows, circuithouse and the residence of the ward who ruled the state during a rājā's minority. In towns with larger British establishments and military lines, these buildings were known as "The Station".[22] The new palace at Keonjhar was situated at the back of the circuithouse near the largest modern building of Keonjhar, the present headquarters of Keonjhar district. In Athgarh and Nayagarh the new palaces were built at beautiful spots beyond these "stations", but within its range of sight.

Misunderstanding the signs of the time, the rājās built these palaces of the "third generation" in an "illusion of permanence"[23] in order to raise their status to the imperial level of British Raj. Politically dependent on its power and protection, they constructed the palaces in the vicinity of the local representatives of this new source of legitimation for their own rule.[24] This source, however, dried up after a few years, leaving unfinished the "Versailles" of Nayagarh and forcing the rājā of Athgarh to vacate his expensive "Solitude" and retire to a very small adjacent building.

---

[22] Pieper, J., *Die Anglo-Indische Station*, Bonn 1977.

[23] Hutchison, F.G., *The Illusion of Permanence. British Imperialism in India*, Princeton 1967.

[24] An exception was Dhenkanal whose raja had to give up, even during the 30s, the construction of a fantastic palace on top of a steep hill far outside the capital. The reasons were water problems and an open popular revolt against the reckless exploitation of (the officially abolished) *beṭhi* labour for the construction of the hill castle.

After a century of rather systematic townplanning, the merger of the feudatory states with Orissa on January 1st, 1948 and the subsequent abolition of the privy purses and privileges of the former rājās brought townplanning in the Garhjat states, though not the rapid growth of population, to a near standstill. With the gradual extinction of kingship as its ideological centre, the ritual space of the princely capitals changed considerably: "de-royalization" led to ritual decentralization. Most affected were those cults and their location which had been directly linked with the court, particularly the poor martyr-*iṣṭadevatā* who had once offered her head for its establishment. To some extent the Jagannātha temples also felt the change, especially those which were again linked to the now dilapidated palaces (e.g. Tigeria in central Orissa and Sonpur in western Orissa). In some cases even the *baḍa daṇḍa* lost its importance, because in new towns the market zone with its tea stalls and small shops was located around the offices and the important bus stand.[25] On the other hand the indigenous, former tribal deities are recovering from the neglect they suffered during the heyday of "Kṣatriyaization" and becoming again the most powerful deities of "their" territory.

V. Conclusion

The present paper has attempted to trace the development pattern of townplanning in capitals of the former feudatory states of central Orissa. As an arena for the display of the legitimacy of political power, the evolution of the capitals clearly reflects the different stages of political development and their specific needs for legitimation.

1) Political development in the Garhjat states began on the local level and derived its legitimation from local cults, usually directly linked with the establishment of the new fort. The typical tutelary deity of this early period was the martyr-*iṣṭadevatā*, a ritually killed member of a local tribe.

---

[25] Examples are Tigeria, Baramba and Nayagarh. In Athgarh and to some extent in Ranpur, too, the *baḍa daṇḍa* remained the main market area.

2) With the extension of political power to the sub-regional level, the main tutelary deity became one of the great goddesses. Legitimacy was derived from patronage of her cult and priests outside the fort. When political power depended on the support of the local tribes and the rural population, legitimation was derived from indigenous cults and their non-Brahmin priests.

3) After consolidation of political power on local and sub-regional levels the chiefs sought recognition as Hindu rājās and began the construction of Hindu temples. With their erection and the settlement of Brahmins outside the fort a new era of townplanning began, in which three stages can be discerned:
   a. the establishment of a new township around the new Hindu temple;
   b. the erection of a new palace near the Hindu temple; and
   c. the construction of completely new capitals with palace and temple forming one single complex.

4) In the course of this process the cult of the "Great Goddess" was overshadowed by the cult of Hindu temples. During this time Jagannātha, the regional state deity of Orissa par excellence, had its greatest impact on townplanning and legitimation. The result was the "Jagannātha temple capital" with the "Great Street" *(baḍa daṇḍa)* as the main characteristic.

5) The last effect of legitimation on townplanning occurred shortly before independence, when a few rājās began to construct new palaces outside the old townships near the small "Anglo-Indian station" in order to derive new legitimacy for their waning power from the Imperial British Government.

TRIBAL DEITIES AT PRINCELY COURTS: THE FEUDATORY RĀJĀS OF CENTRAL ORISSA AND THEIR TUTELARY DEITIES (IṢṬADEVATĀ).

I. Introductory remarks

As historians we usually restrict our research on religions to the so-called *"Hochreligionen"* ("high religions") or to religious movements which have left behind at least some written documents. We thereby avoid the "undocumented" folk cults and tribal religions, though often with the uneasy feeling of separating rather arbitrarily things that belong together. This is particularly true of a religion like Hinduism, where no clear line of distinction can be drawn between the sphere of literary Brahmanical Hinduism and the wide fold of India's folk cults and tribal religions, which form only parts of an interwoven continuum based on mutual interrelation and dependency. Orissa is an excellent example of this interdependence of various levels of Hinduism and even for the influence of tribal and folkcults on the ideological and political developments - certainly an additional reason why historians should include these so-called "unhistorical" cults into their studies, particularly when doing research on Hindu kingship and political legitimacy. The influence of tribal cults was particularly strong in those cases where Hindu rājās patronized tribal deities as their tutelary deities.

The best known example, perhaps from all over India, for the rise of an indigenous former tribal deity to the level of a state deity *(rāṣṭradevatā)* of a medieval kingdom is certainly the Puri god Jagannātha - though it is not the only example from Orissa. Orissa as a whole is particularly rich in former tribal and folk deities which became *iṣṭadevatās* or ("chosen") tutelary deities of the tribal chiefs, princes and Hindu rājās in the Hindu-tribal frontier area. But despite their importance for the religious, social and even political developments, they have not yet received the necessary attention of scholars. This may be at least partly due to their characteristic blending of tribal, folk and Brahmin features

which might have marked them, in the eyes of Indologists and anthropologists, as contaminations of "pure" Hindu-Brahmanic deities on the one side and tribal deities on the other. But as we shall see, it is actually this intended intermixture of various levels within one and the same cult, that makes these deities so important for their socio-religious context and so interesting for a study - provided this broader context and their function within it are included in the study.

Elsewhere I have tried to show that the rise of tribal deities to royal *iṣṭadevatās* began already very early in Orissa and was directly linked to the process of state formation in the early centuries A.D.,[1] a process which continued in the former feudatory states of the Hindu-tribal frontier in the hilly hinterland of Orissa till the 19th century. It is easy to visualize the reason for this development. One of the outstanding features of Orissa is the persistent existence of a strong tribal element throughout its history. Even today about 25% of Orissa's population are tribal people. And in the former 24 feudatory states the tribals constitute even about 80% of the present population. Furthermore, we know from inscriptions and "royal genealogies" *(rājavaṃśābalī)* that many of the rājās themselves had ascended from tribes. It is therefore evident that state formation, consolidation and extension of royal power and its legitimation were possible only through continuous interaction between the court and its surrounding tribals in order to win and maintain their loyalty, an indispensible prerequisite for the survival of any claimant to Hindu kingship in a tribal surrounding. Whether a tribal chief was able to rise in his tribal society and to come forward with a claim to higher authority or whether a freebooter with a few followers was able to establish his claim by initial military coercion - they all had to gain the support or at least loyalty of the tribes in order to consolidate their power and to ensure succession. According to our meagre knowledge of the early history of the princely states of Orissa, recognition of tribal deities as *iṣṭadevatās* and their royal patronage by the newly established courts seems to have been one of the main means to win the loyalty of the tribal population.

---

[1] See above chapter 1.

Now I shall try to substantiate these rather general statements with a few examples from the former feudatory states, mainly from the border areas of the central Mahanadi valley. But it should be mentioned that these delineations are a by-product of a study on the influence of the Jagannātha cult in its hinterland rather than the result of a systematic study of this fascinating, yet almost unexplored subject. The early history of the former Feudatory States of Orissa is one of the least known aspects of Orissa's history. Although several of the (till 1948) ruling families claimed to be descendents of former dynasties,[2] most of them became known only in the late 16th century when Akbar's famous general Mānsingh reorganized Orissa after its conquest.[3] But there can be little doubt that the system of encircling the coastal and particularly the central core region in the Mahanadi delta with a protective semicircle of small semi-autonomous principalities must have gone back to the period of the imperial Gajapati kings who had ruled eastern India from the Ganges to the Godavari till 1568. The heydays of the Garhjat states of Orissa were the 17th and 18th centuries when many of them were able to gain nearly an autonomous status under Muslim rule. In this situation most of the chiefs and rājās were engaged in repeated skirmishes and warfare with their neighbours which made them even more dependent on the loyalty and military support of their tribes. Several ruling families of the Garhjat states, although tracing their legendary history back to the period of the imperial Gajapatis, seem to have been able to finally establish their authority only during this martial period of the 17th and 18th centuries.

---

[2] E.g., the Bhañja families of Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, Baudh, Ghumsur and Kanika are linked with the ancient Bhañjas who had ruled in several branches over parts of northern Orissa, the central Mahanadi valley and southern Orissa since the late centuries of the first millennium A.D. The first Bhañja is known from a Sitabhinji inscription near Keonjhar in the 4th century A.D. - The Rājās of Parlakhemundi claim to be descendants of the Imperial Gaṅgas (12th - 15th centuries) whose forefathers had ruled Kalinga since c. 500 A.D. The Rājās of Sambalpur, Patna-Bolangir and Sonpur linked their legendary origin to the Chauhans, the famous last Hindu dynasty ruling in Delhi till 1192 A.D.

[3] *Aīn-ī-Akbarī*, II. p. 155-157 and A. Stirling, *An Account, Geographical, Statistical and Historical of Orissa Proper, or Cuttack*, reprint, Calcutta 1904, p. 67 ff. See also R.D. Banerji, *History of Orissa*, 1931, vol. II, p. 16-25.

Our main sources of the "dynasties" of the Garhjat states are the genealogies *(rājavaṃśābalī)* and stray information from various independent sources, mostly Persian documents.[4] Being usually products of the 19th and even early 20th centuries the genealogies have only a limited value for historical research. Most of them, however, do contain interesting legends about the foundation of the dynasties and their first rulers which reflect and may even help to explain the position of the rājās *vis-a-vis* their tribes.[5] An analysis of these legends reveals a corresponding pattern of events which led to the foundation of a dynasty and helps us to understand the role played by three different types of tribal deities (mostly goddesses) in its consolidation and legitimation. According to the legendary accounts, several founders of the rāj families entered their future realms as strangers, many of them on their way back from a pilgrimage to Puri - a story which was certainly introduced as an additional element of legitimacy. Several of the *rājavaṃśābalīs* relate as the first act of the future rājā the "ritual killing" of a member of a tribe of that region. His ritual killing usually took place after he himself had told the founder of the dynasty about some miracles which had occurred in this place and after avising him to construct his new fort at this spot. In all cases the victim, before being killed, requested the future rājā to worship his head as the *iṣṭadevatā* of his family. These "heads" of the victims - usually in the form of an aniconic stone - have been worshipped till recently in minor shrines near the palaces. After thus establishing their power by an act of physical coercion, some of these rājās (or one of their early successors) were informed about an already existing, even more powerful goddess in the neighbourhood. In all cases, this second type of goddesses, who are known for their

---

[4] Perhaps the most important are Khān-ī-Daurān's reports which he sent to the imperial court while subduing Orissa's zamindars in 1660/61. Most of them had become independent during the war of succession among Shāh Jahān's sons. For translation of the texts see J.N. Sarkar, The History of Orissa in the Seventeenth Century. Reconstructed from Persian Sources, in: *JBORS,* II, 2 (1916), 153-165. Further sources are translated, *ibid.,* VII (1921), 53-56.

[5] For an interesting interpretation of the creation of the ideal mythological king Pṛthu and the dark forest dweller Niṣāda out of the corpse of the killed wicked king Vena see R. Thapar, Origin, Myths and Early Indian Historical Tradition, in: idem, *Ancient Indian Social History,* New Delhi 1978, p. 307 f.

power (*śakti)* and danger, became the real tutelary deity and soon surpassed the "martyr-*iṣṭadevatā*". In the course of the expansion of their power into the remote hinterland some rājās had to fight with local chiefs who worshipped their own powerful tutelary deities. After defeating these chiefs, their deities became, as a third type of tutelary deities, subsidiary *iṣṭadevatā* of the rājās. They worshipped them temporarily, either by visiting their original place of worship in person or by inviting them and their priests, usually at Durgāpūjā, to their court.

II. The tutelary goddesses of Baramba

The best example to illustrate this stepwise development of political power and ritual authority is known from the *History of the Royal Family of Baramba (Baḍāmbā rājabaṃśara itihāsa)*. Baramba, one of the important yet very small Feudatory States has the typical topography of a garhjat *(gaḍa jāta* = "fort-born") state. Its fort leans with its back against one of the rather low but impenetrable jungle hills still populated by tribals. The palace and the nearby compound of Hindu temples face the fertile and irrigated rice-land at the northern bank of the Mahanadi river. Directly at its bank, about 8 km from the fort, at one of Orissa's most beautiful spots, one meets the temple of Bhaṭṭārikā, the "Great Mother" *(baḍa-ambā)*, from which the state derives its name.

According to the *Baḍāmbā Rājabaṃśara Itihāsa*, the legendary founder of Baramba, Haṭakeśvara Rāut, met near his future fort a pregnant *(garbhābāsa)* Saora woman, Śabaruṇī. He told her: "I shall cut your head and you will be our *ṭhakurāṇī*, (we shall) keep your head and worship will be done".[6] Śabaruṇī then told him about the miracles of the place. "This is a piece of land which produces heroes" because a hare wounded a dog and a crane plunged on a falcon.[7] Hereupon Haṭakeśvara asked her again to

---

[6] to muṇḍa kātibu, tu āmara ṭhākurāṇī hebu to muṇḍa sthāpanā kari pūjā karibu (*Baḍāmbā Rājabaṃśa Itihāsa*, p. 28-29).

[7] A very similar tradition is known about king Anaṅgabhīma III, the founder of Cuttack in the early 14th century (*Mādaḷā Pāñji*, ed. by A.B. Mohanti, 1940, repr. Bhubaneswar 1969, p. 27).

offer her head and promised to worship her as his family deity. Before offering *(samarpita)* her head she advised Haṭakeśvara to kill one Rāmacandra Gaḍatuā, a chief of Kharod in the neighbourhood, who was a strong worshipper of the powerful goddess Mahākālī. Śabaruṇī assured him that through worshipping Mahākālī and Bhaṭṭārikā he would become a rājā.[8] Haṭakeśvara then killed her and kept her head at the gate of his fort. In a slightly different version, the *Children's History of Baramba* relates that only the fifth Rājā of Baramba was able to defeat the chief of Kharod (about 15 km from Baramba) with the secret consent of the goddess Mahākālī who was won over by a tantric Brahmin of Baramba.[9]

During a time of danger it was neither the "martyr-*iṣṭadevatā*" Śabaruṇī nor the subsidiary *iṣṭadevatā* Mahākālī who helped the Rājās of Baramba, but the "Great Mother" *(baḍāmbā)* Bhaṭṭārikā. Once, when Haṭakeśvara was attacked by the Rājā of Khandpara, a neighbouring Garhjat state, the goddess Bhaṭṭārikā told him when he went to worship her in her temple: "I shall go in the disguise of a milkmaid and sell (poisoned) curd. The soldiers (of Khandpara) will eat the curd and become unconscious. Holding the sword, I shall kill the soldiers of Khandpara." So the goddess Bhaṭṭārikā killed the soldiers near a varuna tree and named the place *muṇḍuukulākucā*.[10] This name ("smashing the heads"?) may well be related to the Meriah killings which were prevalent particularly among the Khonds on the southern side of the Mahanadi river, not far away from Bhaṭṭārikā.

Before referring to *iṣṭadevatās* of other Garhjat rājās let us have a brief look at the cults of these three tutelary deities of Baramba and their relations with the Rājās of Baramba.[11] Śabaruṇī is kept

---

[8] According to L.E.B. Cobden Ramsay, *Feudatory States of Orissa (Bengal Gazetteers)*, Calcutta 1910, p. 128, it was only under Malakeśvara, the second Rājā of Baramba, that Bhaṭṭārikā was discovered and recognized as tutelary deity of Baramba.

[9] *Pilaṅka Baḍāmbā Itihāsa,* 1940, p. 8-10.

[10] *Baḍāmba Rājabaṃśara Itihāsa,* p. 87.

[11] I am grateful to Prof. Dr. G.N. Dash of Berhampur University for his great help during the field work on Bhaṭṭārikā, Kharod, Ranpur and Khiḷā Muṇḍa.

near the entrance of the palace in a small shrine which contains a few small old stone sculptures and two unhewn stones, one of which is worshipped as Śabaruṇī. But no regular pūjā is offered to her by the māli priest. Once a year, at Caitra Purṇimā, she is taken to the nearby hillock Śabaruṇī Muṇḍia (or Śauruṇī Muṇḍamārī), a name which may well identify this hillock as the original place of the Śabaruṇī worship from where it was transferred to the palace of Baramba. At Caitra Purṇimā a Śabara sacrifices a male pig by smashing its head. The *calantī pratimā* or "mobile image" of the goddess Bhaṭṭārikā is brought from her shrine in the palace in order to be present during this sacrifice. But neither the rājā nor his rājaguru participates in it. Śabaruṇī thus seems to have remained nearly completely a tribal folk deity[12] that had been offered shelter near the palace in recognition of her legendary sacrifice during the establishment of the fort. The yearly sacrifice of a male pig seems to commemorate this primeval human sacrifice.

Bhaṭṭārikā is likewise known in Orissa for her power *(śakti)* and her beautiful spot at the Mahanadi. The place must have been associated with human sacrifices and tantrism[13] long before the present temple, displaying typical late medieval Orissa architecture and evading all attempts to determine its exact date, was constructed.[14]

Despite the genuine Hindu architecture of the temple, there is no sculpture of the goddess Bhaṭṭārikā. Instead, a strangely formed piece of the rock, the same on which the temple is constructed, is worshipped in the temple as Bhaṭṭārikā. There are at least two aetiological legends known that offer an explanation for this unusual aniconic idol of a goddess with a Hindu name. Best known is the story of Paraśurāma, who once pierced that piece of rock, which now is worshipped as Bhaṭṭārikā, with his arrow.

---

[12] The name Śabaruṇī or Śauruṇī seems to indicate some association with Tantrism, which the author, however, was not able to trace in Baramba.

[13] K.P. Mitra, Goddess Bhattarika, in: *Man in India,* 11 (1931) 15-23. About 15 years ago, a beautiful small Padmapāni image was found near the temple which is now kept in one of the niches of the temple.

[14] Local tradition links the present temple with a king of the Ḍāhala (Kalacuri) dynasty of the 13th century.

The legend provides a good example of the Hinduization of a tribal deity. Certainly of more recent origin is the story related in the *Children's History of Baramba*, according to which thieves once took away the golden image of Bhaṭṭārikā. But when they tried to cross the river in a boat, they lost their orientation due to Bhaṭṭārikā's power of illusion. To save their lives, they threw the image into the Mahanadi. The same night, the goddess appeared to the Rājā of Baramba and told him where to find her. The king rescued the precious image out of the sand of the river. "Since that day the golden image *(sunara pratimā)* of Bhaṭṭārikā is kept in the fort *(gaḍa)*."[15]

The priests of Bhaṭṭārikā are without exception non-Brahmins. They belong to the gardener *(māli)* caste which is to be found even today in many temples of Hinduized, former tribal or folk deities in Orissa.[16] The chief priest *(mārfatdār)* bears the title Mahāpātra, which was bestowed on one of his forefathers by the Rājā of Baramba. Originally there were 18 families of priests. The daily rituals which they perform regularly consist of 5 *abakāśas* and 3 *dhūpas*. Till independence - which brought also the end of the rājā's independence - *pāduka* offerings of the goddess were sent to the palace daily.

The Rājās of Baramba visited Bhaṭṭārikā on several festive occasions during the year, particularly during Durgāpūjā *(dasarā)* and on Karttika Pūrṇimā. Whenever the rājās visited their main tutelary deity, they were accompanied by their rājagurus. The role played by them on these occasions can usually be regarded as an indicator of the stage of Hinduization of the goddess and the grade of her inclusion into the royal pantheon. It is therefore significant that in the case of Bhaṭṭārikā the rājaguru does not take over the pūjā nor does he participate in it even during the visits of the rājas. This clearly proves the power and importance of the goddess and their non-Brahmin priests, i.e. their autonomous status *vis-a-vis* the rājā. Furthermore, Bhaṭṭārikā's regional

---

[15] *Pilaṅka Baḍāmbā Itihāsa*, p. 26.

[16] In one of her last research papers, late Dr. Anncharlott Eschmann dealt with the māli priests of the Liṅgarāja temple at Bhubaneswar and lectured on them at the International Orientalists Conference in Mexico in August 1976.

importance, not being confined to the state of Baramba, becomes evident from the fact that the 8th day during Durgāpūjā *(mahāṣṭami)* is reserved for worship and sacrifices performed by the rāj families of the neighbouring Garhjat states of Narshinghpur, Khandpara and Tigiria. But the Rājās of Baramba are the only among these families who possess a "mobile image" *(calantī pratimā)* of Bhaṭṭārikā in their palace. Whereas the worship of the aniconic idol of the goddess at her place of origin is exclusively performed by the original non-Brahmin priests, the worship of the golden image of Bhaṭṭārikā in the shape of a two-armed Durgā in the palace is performed by the rājaguru only. It is this royal image of the fully Hinduized deity Bhaṭṭārikā that pays visits to the original tribal deity and its non-Brahmin priests.

As a third or 'subsidiary' tutelary deity of the Rājās of Baramba, we have already mentioned Mahākālī of Kharod. Kharod is situated about 15 km northwest of Baramba near its western border to Narsinghpur and close to its hilly northern border to Angul. The 'image' of Mahākālī, an aniconic round stone of about one foot in height, is worshipped in a temple constructed only in the early 20th century by the Rājā of Baramba. According to the information given by her priest, a 'Śūdra Kṣatriya', Mahākālī lived on a hill near Kharod and agreed to re-appear in Kharod itself in an earthen pot *(jhari)* in the kitchen of her first devotee, a forefather of the present priest. On this spot she is worshipped today, together with another cylindrical stone representing Kālī, in her new Hindu Temple.[17] According to the Rājabaṃśa Itihāsa of Baramba and the tradition still prevalent in Kharod, the Rājā of Baramba keeps his sword *(alamā)* near Mahākālī since he was able to conquer Kharod with her consent.

Similar to Bhaṭṭārikā's image in the palace shrine at Baramba two golden images *(bije pratimā),* depicting Kālī and Mahākālī in the form of Durgā, are worshipped in the palace at Baramba by the rājā and his rājaguru. During Dussehra the sword is taken from Kharod to Baramba in order to invite the two *bije pratimās* to visit their original place of worship. During their stay in Kharod the golden images are kept in a temporary hut beside the Mahākālī

---

[17] It is remarkable that Mahākālī is represented by a slightly smaller stone than Kālī.

temple and are worshipped by a Brahmin who accompanies the images. But as in the case of Bhaṭṭārikā, the rājaguru does not take part in any pūjā of the original Mahākālī, even when the rājā comes for *darśana*.

III. The 'Martyr Iṣṭadevatā'

Having described the system of different tutelary deities of the former Feudatory State of Baramba, a few examples of the various *iṣṭadevatās* from different Garhjat states may now be given. They are arranged according to the system followed in the chapter on Baramba.

Martyr-*iṣṭadevatās* are known from many Garhjat states throughout central Orissa. Dhenkanal is said to have been founded by Dheṅka Śabara.[18] His name seems to be linked with the tribal chief Dhekata who was defeated in the late 8th century by a rājā of the Śūlkī dynasty whose capital was Kodalaka (present Kualo), situated between Dhenkanal and Talcher.[19] According to local traditions, the former feudatory state of Dhenkanal was founded in the middle of the 17th century by Singh Bidyādhara, allegedly a scion of the Khurda dynasty.[20] Bidyādhara conquered the country, killed Dheṅka Śabara and named the state after him. To the west of the palace there is even today a mound known as Śabara Dheṅka Muṇḍa or Dhenkeśvara Muṇḍa[21] ('the head of the lord of Dhenkanal') to which the Rājās of Dhenkanal until recently used to render worship once or twice a year.[22]

In Nayagarh, Sūryamaṇi, the legendary first ruler, who is supposed to have come from Rewah, met a pregnant Bauri woman.

---

[18] S.R. Roy, The Sabaras of Orissa, in: *Man in India*, 7 (1927), p. 284 ff. and V. Elwin, *The Religion of an Indian Tribe*, 1955, p. 32.

[19] B. Mishra, *Dynasties of Medieval Orissa*, 1936, p. 32.

[20] L.E.B. Cobden Ramsay, op.cit., p. 164.

[21] S.N. Roy, op.cit.

[22] For more details see Ramachandra Nanda, *Dheṅkanāḷa Itihāsa*, Dhenkanal 1929, p. 184.

She told him that she was the presiding goddess of this place and he should kill and worship her as the *iṣṭadevatā* of the new dynasty, which he was going to establish. Even today she is worshipped by the present rāj family in the form of a jar, housed in a mud hut near the old palace.[23]

In Banki an old tradition relates that Balabhadra Dhala, the legendary founder of the Dhala dynasty, on his way back from Puri searched for a suitable place for his new fort. He met a Dhobi (washerman caste) who told him about the miracles of the place: a crane had pounced upon an eagle in the jungle.[24] The Dhobi agreed to be sacrificed "on the condition that the rājā should establish a Durgā Devī named after him."[25] The place where a stone called Dhobei Guru was worshipped can still be seen near the old fort which was destroyed in 1840 when the state was confiscated by the East India Company.

Another example of a 'martyr *iṣṭadevatā* ' is known from the former Feudatory State of Narsinghpur on the northern bank of the Mahanadi. According to oral tradition, written down by British administrators,[26] the place was ruled by two Khond chiefs with the name Narsingh Jena and Pura Jena. One Dharma or (Dharum) Singh, a Rājput of Jaipur was ordered by the goddess Durgā in a dream to proceed to Narsinghpur and kill the Khond chiefs and take possession of the state. After being defeated, the Khond chiefs agreed to be sacrificed after Dharma Singh had promised to worship their heads as his *iṣṭadevatā*. These 'heads' are still to be seen in the central street of Narsinghpur on a stone pillar of about one and a half metres in height. But even a superficial glance at this quite impressive pillar reveals the difficulty of associating tribal cults with both the rāj family and the name of the state. On top of the 'capital' of this pillar there are *three* instead of *two* skull-

---

[23] K.C. Singh Mandhata, *History of Nayagarh*, 1971 (Ms.), p. 6.

[24] *Final Report of Settlement of Banki*, 1905-1906, p. 2

[25] Nilakantha Ratha, *Bāṅkī Itihāsa*, 1971, p. 6.

[26] Cobden Ramsay, op.cit., p. 258 and *Report on the Completion of the Settlement of Land Revenue of the Narsingpur Feudatory States*, Berhampur 1962, p. 9.

shaped forms, three being obviously the original number. Therefore it must have been at a later stage that the rather clumsy attempt was made to link this sacrifice with the name Narsinghpur.[27]

Two other examples of ritual killings are known in connection with the establishment of a fort *(gaḍa)*, though not directly linked with the tutelary deities of the respective dynasties. A local Oriya chronicle of the 18th century, the *Cakoḍā Pothi*, relates that Rāmacandra, the founder of the Khurda dynasty, killed the owner of the village Khorodha, named Śūddha Śauri Baḷībikrama Singh, and put his head under the *baḍa abakāśa bhadra* of the fort and changed the name of the village to 'Jagannāthapur Kaṭaka' - which, however, never became popular.[28]

The legendary founder of the Garhjat state Talcher, Padmanābha Haricandana, was on a hunting tour near Talcher when his dog was attacked by a hare. Realizing the greatness *(māhātmya)* of this place, he decided to build his new fort at that very spot. But soon afterwards he was defeated and driven into the jungle by the Khaṇḍuāla of this place. The same night, Hiṅguḷā Devī appeared to him in a dream and ordered him to worship Tāḷeśvarī at a *tala* tree (palmyra palm) and to kill the chief of the fishermen *(kaibarta)*.[29] Padmanābha followed her advice and killed the Kaibarta with the help of the goddess Hiṅguḷā who devoured the enemies in the disguise of a tiger.

IV. The Great Goddess as Iṣṭadevatā

In several Garhjat states of central Orissa, rāj families worship a powerful goddess as their main tutelary deity: Bhaṭṭārikā in Baramba, Cārccikā in Banki, Maṇināgeśvarī in Ranpur and Hiṅguḷā in Talcher. They all belong to the powerful 'Eight

---

[27] It is therefore not surprising that a Brahmin at Narsinghpur told the author that there were indeed three Khond headmen: Nara, Singha and Paro!

[28] *Cakoḍā Pothi*, ed. by S. Pattnaik, 1959, p. 6. The meaning of *baḍa abakāśa bhadra* is not clear.

[29] *Tālacera Itihāsa*, p. 34; Cobden Ramsay, op.cit., p. 330.

Mothers" *(aṣṭamātṛkā)* of Orissa[30] who, according to several traditions prevalent in Orissa, form (together with the *aṣṭaśambhu* or 'eight Sivas') the pegs of a tent with Jagannātha as its central pole. The main features of these four goddesses are their still clearly discernible indigenous tribal origin as well as their importance and power, which is not restricted to their immediate neighbourhood.

We have already discussed the Great Mother *(baḍa-ambā)* Bhaṭṭārikā of Baramba. She is certainly one of the most prominent goddesses of indigenous origin, 'taken over' by Garhjat rājās. Her importance and power was such that the Rājās of Baramba were not able to 'intrude' into her cult completely. On the contrary, they had to share her *śakti* with the original priests and the Rājās of Narsinghpur and Nayagarh who have no powerful goddesses of regional fame as their own *iṣṭadevatā*.

Maṇināgeśvarī of Ranpur is another of these great 'regional' goddesses of Orissa. Her origin can be traced back to the late 5th and early 6th centuries when she was mentioned in connection with land donations as the mother *(ambikā) Maṇināga Bhaṭṭārakā*.[31] It is interesting to note that in the same inscription, which mentions the goddess for the first time in 599/600 A.D., we are also informed about '18 forest states' *(aṣṭadaśa-āṭavī rājya)*. These obviously tribal states formed part of Dakṣina Tośali (roughly the present district of Puri and part of Cuttack), the region in which Maṇināgeśvarī is situated. Her temple is located on top of one of the steep hills which even today separate the Hinduized delta region from its hilly hinterland populated by tribes.

---

30 According to Jaganbandhu Samantaraі, *Cārccikā Māhātmya*, Gopalpur 1968, p. 6 ff. these *aṣṭakiḷā* are: Cārccikā in Banki, Śāraḷā in Jhankada, Virajā in Jajpur, Hiṅgulā near Talcher, Samalāi in Sambalpur, Vimaḷā in Puri, Bhagavatī in Banpur and Maṅgalā in Kakatpur. See also H. Kulke, Local Networks and Regional Integration in Orissa. Ritual Privileges of the Feudatory Rajas of Eastern India in the Jagannātha Cult of Puri, in: *Changing South Asia: Religion and Society*, ed. by K. Ballhatchet and D. Taylor. London, Hongkong 1984, p. 141-148.

31 D.C. Sircar, Two Plates from Kanas, in: *EI*, XXVIII, p. 328-334; S.N. Rajaguru, *IO*, vol. I, 2, p. 120 ff. and 130 ff.; see also R.N. Mishra, Identification of Sunakhala of the Olasingh Plate of Bhānuvardhan and the God Maṇi-Nāgeśvara, in: *OHRJ*, 16, 3 (1973), p. 31 ff.

Her pure Sanskrit name ('Lady of the Jewel Serpent') would make one expect a sculpture of a Hindu goddess - as is actually done by people outside Ranpur, who have not visited the goddess on top of the Maninaga hill. But her image is a flat round stone *(chatā pathara)* resembling the numberless *grāma devatās* of Orissa's villages. Behind her, two images of Cāmuṇḍā of the later medieval style have been set up. The bigger one seems to be identified with Maṇinägeśvarī.

As in the case of Bhaṭṭārikā, there are two, though contradictory, aetiological legends, designed to explain the 'strange' shape of the goddess. According to a tradition, prevalent among the Brahmins at Ranpur, the image had once been stolen by Brahmins of the Śāsana village Ramachandrapur in Puri district. Some of the informants were of the opinion that the image is still in Ramachandrapur, whereas others report that the Rājā of Ranpur recovered it with the help of the goddess herself and buried it under the *chatā pathara*.

According to the written accounts of the rāj family, which are of rather recent origin,[32] the existence of the *chatā pathara* is explained in a very different way. According to this tradition, Biśvabasu, the Saora chief and first legendary devotee of Nīlamādhava-Jagannātha, was the founder of the Ranpur dynasty.[33] After king Indradyumna had taken away the original Nīlamādhava image

---

32 *Rānapuradurga Rājabaṃśānukramaṇi* by Lingaraj Sarangi (1962) and *Rānapura Rājabaṃśa* by Damodar Singh (1971). Copies of these handwritten manuscripts were obtained by the author and are preserved in the Library of the Orissa Research Project, South Asia Institute, Heidelberg. Detailed introductions in the legendary and historical traditions are furthermore provided by the *Report on Survey and Settlement of Ranpur State, 1896-1900* (no date of publication) and by G.N. Singh, *Final Report of the Original Survey and Settlement Operations of the Ranpur Ex-State Area in the District of Puri (1943-1952)*, Berhampur 1963.

33 Another typical fabrication of the royal genealogists traces the origin of this dynasty even back to Niṣāda, the elder dark-faced brother of the ideal mythological Hindu king Pṛthu. It is remarkable that in Orissa even in the 19th and early 20th centuries, when Hinduization reached its culmination in the former Feudatory States of Orissa, there seems to have been no hesitation to link the dynasty with an obviously tribal ancestor - in this case even with two, i.e. a Śabara and a Niṣāda. But there are other examples which show that some dynasties of Orissa in the late 19th and early 20th centuries denied their indigenous origin and claimed to be of Rājput origin (e.g. Narsinghpur, Mayurbhanj). See R.D. Banerji, Rajput Origin in Orissa, in: *Modern Review*, XLIII, 3 (1928), 285-329. (Reprinted in Banerji's *History of Orissa*, 1931, vol. II, app.)

of Jagannātha[34] to Puri, Biśvabasu took Nīlamādhava's round pedestal to Ranpur and installed it on the nearby Maninaga hill. He began to worship it as Maṇināgeśvarī, recognized her as tutelary deity and cleared the jungle with her help. Both legends had obviously been introduced in order to explain the aniconic shape of this deity.[35] The second is even more 'successful' in attempting to link Ranpur and the legitimacy of its rāj family with Jagannātha, the 'imperial' state deity of Orissa.

Whereas the irregular pūjā in the small temple on top of the hill is performed by a māli priest, her main worship is conducted by Brahmin and non-Brahmin priests in the Taḷa Maṇināgeśvarī temple at the foot of the hill near the place of the earliest fort.[36] The worship of the *calanti pratimā* of Maṇināgeśvarī in the new palace itself, shaped as eight-armed Durgā, is performed exclusively by the rājaguru of Ranpur.

The rājā used to visit Maṇināgeśvarī particularly during Baḍa Ekadaśi in the month of Māgha (January-February). Half of the way he was carried in a palanquin, on the last and steepest part he rode an elephant. Whenever he visited the temple, the rājaguru performed the pūjā and the māli priest watched him. This "weakness" of the non-Brahmin priest might be explained by the long and uninterrupted process of Hinduization in the Ranpur area. But more likely, the reason behind this obvious difference from Bhaṭṭārikā may be the fact that - because of its topograhical

---

[34] For the Indradyumna legend see R. Geib, *Die Indradyumna Legende. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Jagannātha-Kultes*, 1975; and K.C. Mishra, *The Cult of Jagannatha*, 1971.

[35] It is quite likely that the story of the stone image of Nīlamādhava, the alleged first image of "Jagannātha" and its mysterious disappearence - and thus the whole Indradyumna legend - has exactly the same function: to explain the unorthodox iconography of the original wooden image of Jagannātha.

[36] Out of pity for her priest, who had to climb up the hill several times a day, Maṇināgeśvarī herself had once indicated this spot as her new place of worship by throwing her jar from the top of the hill to this place. This is a well known topos for an early stage of Hinduization of tribal mountain deities, e.g. Vyāghra Devī ("Tiger Goddess") who at present has her main temple at the foot of a hill near Ghumsur whereas the original goddess *(mūla devī)* is still worshipped on top of the hill. The new place of Vyāghra Devi's temple was also indicated by the cast of the jar *(gaḍu)* by the goddess. (*Ghumuṣara Kābya,* 51 a and 51 b; Manuscript Library of the Orissa State Museum, No. Or. 360). A similiar story is known from Mahākālī in Kharod (see above).

feature - the steep Maninaga hill prevented local priests to settle down near the powerful goddess and to perform her pūjā on a regular basis.

Although human sacrifices have been stopped since long, everybody in Ranpur still seems to know something about them. According to the personal assertion of Lingaraj Sarangi, the 75 year old author (1974) of one of the two Ranpur Itihāsas and member of the Vasiṣṭha gotra, human sacrifices took place mainly in the month *(māsa)* of Māgha. They were performed by a group of people who were accordingly called *Māgha-māsiā* and to whom land *(jagir)* had been allotted. It seems there has not been a particular place for the killing, but the blood of the victim had to be carried up to Maṇināgeśvarī. Since the king used to visit his tutelary deity especially during Māgha, the month when sacrifices were performed by the Māghamāsiā, it is most likely that that human sacrifices had formed an essential part of the royal worship of the goddess Maṇināgeśvarī.

Cārccikā at Banki also belongs to the "Eight Mothers" of Orissa. Her temple is situated on a hillock at the southern bank of the Mahanadi river and is now encircled by the township of Banki. For the first time she is mentioned in the *Puruṣottama Māhātmya* which may be dated at about 1300 A.D. Indradyumna, the legendary founder of the first Jagannātha temple, worshipped Cārccikā while on his way from Western India to Puri, which is a clear indicator of the importance of Cārccikā at about 1300 A.D.[37] According to the *Cārccikā Māhātmya* of recent origin, Cārccikā was first worshipped by members of the Bauri tribe under an *aṅku* tree on the Rucika hill where her present temple is situated. After a short stay at Tigeria on the other side of the Mahanadi river, Cārccikā ordered the Rājā of Banki in a dream to bring her back and to construct a temple for her.[38]

In contrast to the aniconic images of Bhaṭṭārikā and Maṇināgeśvarī, the goddess Cārccikā is worshipped in her temple in the form

---

[37] *Puruṣottama Māhātmya* of the Skanda Purāṇa, Bombay 1911, XI, 91, describes her in the form of Kālī or Cāmuṇḍā with a garland of skulls and as Śaktī of Viṣṇu (see R. Geib, op.cit., p. 105).

[38] *Cārccikā Māhātmya*, p. 6ff.

of an image of Durgā. Outside, on the northern side of the temple, however, arises a small oval mound of about one meter in length, which is said to represent the original Cārccikā. The legendary account of her origin[39] as a tree deity and the mound near her temple clearly identify her as an indigenous former tribal folk deity. The legend of her short stay at Tigeria, after her tree had fallen down, may have been introduced in order to explain her metamorphosis from an aniconic deity to a Hindu goddess.

From the time Banki was annexed by the East India Company in the year 1840, after the last rājā had been accused of the murder of a Brahmin,[40] our knowledge about the relationship between the former rājās and their tutelary deity is a rather limited one and is based mainly on the legendary accounts collected in the *Banki Itihāsa*.[41] According to it, Balabhadra, the founder of the Dhala dynasty, was appointed several centuries ago with the help of Cārccikā as Rājā of Banki by the Rājā of Puri. In a dream she had given him two golden ear rings, through which he won the confidence of the Rājā of Puri. Hereafter, Balabhadra returned to Banki and, following the advice of Dhobei Guru, whose head was later worshipped as *iṣṭadevatā* of the rāj family, constructed his fort Bankigarh about 8 km west of Cārccikā.

As a last example from central Orissa we may refer to Hiṅguḷā, the *iṣṭadevatā* of the former Rājās of Talcher. We have already seen that Hiṅguḷā had advised the founder of Talcher, Padmanābha Haricandana, to worship the tree goddess Tāḷeśvarī and to kill the headman of the fishermen *(kaivarta)* and had helped him defeat the Khaṇḍuālas of the area.

Although the name Talcher is derived from the goddess Tāḷeśvari, Hiṅguḷā became the undisputed *iṣṭadevatā* of Talcher. Her shrine is situated in Gopalprasad about 20 km west of Talcher near the coal fields. A thorough study on Hiṅguḷā was carried out by

---

[39] In a later phase of Hinduization, Cārccikā's temple was identified with one of the Śakta pīṭhas where a limb of Satī, Śiva's wife, fell on the earth after the enraged Śiva had cut her into pieces.

[40] In order to avoid a Brahmin's blood falling on the ground, the rājā is said to have him killed in running water.

[41] Nilakantha Ratha, *Bāṅki Itihāsa*, 1932.

A. Eschmann in connection with her research on tribal prototypes of the great Nabakalebara ritual at Puri, during which the wooden images of the Jagannātha trinity are periodically renewed.[42] In a very similar way the wooden post of Hiṅguḷā is renewed once in a lifetime of each Rājā of Talcher. This great event for both, the cult of the goddess as well as for the rājā, usually takes place during the first yearly Hiṅguḷā yātrā[43] after the coronation of the king. He himself is present throughout the ceremony after having offered his weapons (sword and guns) to the goddess. The ritual, however, is carried out by the original *dehuri* priests. The Rājā and the rājaguru remain royal spectators. Only the important consecration formula *(pratiṣṭhāmantra)* is given by a Brahmin from the palace at Talcher. Throughout the ritual, royal soldiers watch over the whole ceremony indicating, as A. Eschmann observed, the special relationship between the goddess Hiṅguḷā and the rājā.

The cult of Hiṅguḷā, who is worshipped in a wooden post, seems to be directly linked with the cults of Stambheśvarī ("Lady of the Post"). During the 7th and 9th centuries A.D., Stambheśvarī was the tutelary goddess of the Śūlkī dynasty, which ruled in the Talcher-Dhenkanal region, a region which is still the centre of this cult in contemporary central Orissa. Other places outside central Orissa are Sonpur in western Orissa and Aska in the Ganjam district, where this formerly tribal cult was linked till recently with rāj families.[44]

V. Subsidiary Iṣṭadevatā

"Subsidiary *iṣṭadevatās*" of the type which we have already met in Mahākālī of Kharod near Baramba seem to have existed only in a small number of former Feudatory States. Besides Mahākālī, Khiḷā Muṇḍā of Ranpur is most important in this connection.

---

42 A. Eschmann, Prototypes of the Nabakalebara Ritual and their Relation to the Jagannātha Cult, in: *CJ*, p. 265-283 (276ff.)

43 During Hiṅguḷā yātrā the goddess appears in a fire. Gopalprasad is therefore one of the important places of firewalking in Orissa.

44 A. Eschmann, Hinduization of Tribal Deities in Orissa: The Śākta and Śaiva Typology, in: *CJ*, p. 79-98.

The legend of the goddess Khiḷā Muṇḍā[45] and her inclusion in the royal pantheon of Ranpur is very illustrative. Once the Rājā of Ranpur was defeated by the Gajapati king. He had to vacate his palace at Ranpur and flee into the deep jungle near the southern border to Banpur. He stayed there, living in distress till Khiḷā Muṇḍā, the goddess of this locality, appeared to him in the form of a monkey. While jumping from one tree to another, the monkey did not reach the other tree but returned half way back to the original tree. The Rājā of Ranpur understood this as an auspicious sign of the goddess and began to reconquer his state on the same day with the help of the local tribe. Having defeated the troops of the Gajapati, the Rājā of Ranpur decided to worship the goddess Khiḷā Muṇḍā regularly.

Till today, she occupies the status of a subsidiary *iṣṭadevatā* of the Ranpur rāj family, next only to the powerful goddess Maṇināgeśvarī. At her place of origin, which can be reached only after several kilometres of walking through the jungle, she is worshipped under big trees in the form of three little earthen heaps of about 15 cm in height, situated near a termite mound.[46] A thatched hut, built a few decades ago, has fallen into a very dilapidated state already. There is no regular pūjā performed, but thrice a month her place is cleaned by her priest Aintha Jani, who also performs sacrifices whenever requested by the local population.

Throughout the year a long bamboo stick *(kāṭhi)* of about 6 m is kept in the palace compound of Ranpur outside the royal shrine which contains the images of Maṇināgeśvarī. This *kāṭhi* serves as the link between the palace and Khiḷā Muṇḍā in the jungle. During Durgā Pūjā, this stick becomes Khiḷā Muṇḍā, or in other words: it becomes the medium of possession in which Khiḷā Muṇḍā visits the palace of Ranpur.

On the *dvitīya oṣa* day of Durgā Pūjā, Khiḷā Muṇḍā is offered a cock, fish and a bottle of wine at her original place in the jungle

---

45 The derivation of the name is very uncertain; perhaps from Oriya *khiḷa* "waste land" and *muṇḍā* "trunk" which may refer to the worship of a wooden post like *kāṭhi* "stick" in *Bhagavatīkāṭhi* of Banpur. The name *muṇḍā* also means "head", as e.g. in *muṇḍā-mari* and certainly refers to human sacrifices.

46 They are named Guptasiṅgi, Patiakara and Khiḷā Muṇḍā. Patiakara is Khiḷā Muṇḍā's son. It is said that they form one single stone with three branches.

by her priest, who keeps a fast. At the same time the Khiḷā Muṇḍā stick, now adorned with 8 saris (previously 16) is carried by 8 people (previously 16) from the palace in Ranpur to the jungle place of Khiḷā Muṇḍā. After the stick has reached Khiḷā Muṇḍā's place in the far-off jungle, the priest,[47] amidst the sound of two big drums *(dhola)*, beaten by two members of the sweeper caste, becomes possessed by the goddess. As the medium *(kālīsi)* of Khiḷā Muṇḍā, the priest will then cling to the kāṭhi, which in the meantime has been shouldered by the 8 people from Ranpur. After a few moments, the *kālīsi* suddenly drops on the ground, indicating thus that Khiḷā Muṇḍā has now entered the stick. Everybody assured the author and G.N. Dash during their investigation that the stick is now as heavy as a human being.

On her way to Ranpur, Khiḷā Muṇḍā is worshipped at five places. Near Ranpur she is welcomed by the Jani (non-Brahmin) priest of the Taḷa Maṇināgeśvarī temple, who also performs a pūjā before her. At the palace itself the worship is taken over and exclusively performed by the royal Brahmin.[48] But the tribal priest receives a sari from the royal store-room.

After Dasarā Khiḷā Muṇḍā returns to her original place in a pigeon, which has been decorated with vermillion and put on the stick. Some feathers found near her shrine are taken as an indication that the pigeon died and Khiḷā Muṇḍā returned to her shrine in the jungle.

Although the former princely state of Mandasa (=Mañjūṣā) in northern Andhra Pradesh is outside central Orissa, its Khiḷā Muṇḍā goddess should be briefly mentioned here, since it resembles Ranpur's Khiḷā Muṇḍā to a large extent. The Mandasa state, situated near the southern slopes of the Mahendragiri, traces its traditional dynastic history back to the early 13th century when the Imperial Gaṅgas were ruling over Orissa. The former Rājās of Mandasa still regard Śiva Gokarṇeśvara on the Mahendragiri, the former state deity *(rāṣṭradevatā)* of the early Gaṅgas, as their tutelary deity. But the *iṣṭadevatā* of the rāj family is Khiḷā Muṇḍā,

---

47 Nowadays a relative of the priest becomes possessed by the goddess.

48 When the rājā visits Khiḷā Muṇḍā in the jungle - an event that took place only once during the lifetime of the present rājaguru - the latter is perfoming the pūjā.

worshipped in a bamboo stick (c. 2,50 m) in a small shrine near the former fort, about 8 km outside the present Mandasa.

When a bamboo-cutter once tried to cut a cane at the Mahendragiri, milk and blood trickled out of the cutting. The same night, the goddess appeared to the rājā. He ordered to sacrifice the bamboo-cutter immediately and brought the bamboo stick to his fort, where he began to worship her as *rājakula-iṣṭadevatā* under the name Khiḷāmuṇḍā Bhagavatī.[49] During Durgāpūjā, Khiḷā Muṇḍā, dressed with 7 saris and a silver diadem provided by the rājā, is brought to Mandasa where the rājaguru takes over the worship. During Mahāṣṭamī three puppets - two female and one male - are "sacrificed" as substitutes for human sacrifices which were stopped in the late 18th century by the East India Company. Khiḷā Muṇḍā returns to her place in the depth of the night when all doors of Mañjūṣā's houses are closed.

In cases of severe drought Khiḷā Muṇḍā is dressed again with her saris and royal ornaments and taken to her primordial place at the Mahendragiri. There the sacrifice of a buffalo is performed, whose blood is caught in a bowl and poured drop by drop onto the earth - obviously a rain magic. Most probably in these cases, too, the sacrificed buffalo is a substitute for a human being.[50]

VI. Summary and conclusions

Before summarizing the account on tribal cults at the courts of central Orissa's former Feudatory States and trying to come to some conclusions, a few general words about the intentions of this paper and the methods applied in it may be appropriate.

---

[49] J. Kavyabisarada, *Mañjūsā Rājabaṃśānucarita*, Puri 1915, p. 11. Another Bhagavatī Kāṭhi is known from Banpur where it is worshipped in the Dakṣayājñeśvara temple in a c. 5 m long stick, wrapped up in numberless saris.

[50] The author remembers well his visit to Kiḷā Muṇḍā near Mandasa in July 1974, together with Padmasri Satyanarayan Rajguru, when the monsoon was already delayed for about 5 weeks. The day before our visit, the buffalo sacrifice had been performed at the Mahendragiri, but apparently in vain. So the priests were eager to dress her again - which is quite unusual in the presence of a foreigner - before returning the saris and the diadem to the rājā next morning. It was a strange experience when, all of a sudden, heavy rains began a few minutes after we had left Khiḷā Muṇḍā.

The paper is to a large extent based on so-called "unhistorical" cults and their legendary accounts of uncertain origin, which is perhaps the last and also at least source material a historian would like to rely upon. Moreover, no attempt has been made in this paper to link these legends as far as possible to historical events. The reason for this caution is certainly not only the realization that such an undertaking would be a different and difficult one and in many cases an even impossible work. More important is that legends were usually neither created nor meant for the explanation of a certain singular *event*. Rather they reflect a social, economic or religious *situation* which has to be explained or legitimized, particularly its immanent contradictions and conflicts. The *oral* tradition of these legends depends on the persistence of this situation. Legends are thus an important, if not essential, part of the ideology of a particular time, especially if they deal with political power, its establishment and legitimation, as we saw in the cases of those legends surrounding the tutelary deities of the former rājās of Orissa.

This interpretation of cults and their legends does not, of course, imply that they are mere fabrications meant for the indoctrination of the ruled by the rulers. Legends live from a certain truth which is acceptable to both sides. Legends and the cults to which they are directly linked reflect, therefore, a certain aspect of reality of the times of their origin and further development. The question of their historical origin may certainly be interesting, too, but is not essential for explaining their relevance in later times.

The importance of the royal legends and cults which have been dealt with in the previous pages lies in their double function. They explain and legitimize the superior position of the Hindu rājās in a formerly egalitarian tribal society and, at the same time, reconcile the tribes with their position vis-a-vis these new rājās. In the case of royal legends and tribal cults this reconciliation is attempted by elevating tribal gods and their priests to royal tutelary deities and priests and, particularly during Durgāpūjā, allowing the tribals to participate in festivals of hitherto unknown greatness.

Summarizing the functions of the tutelary deities of the rājās of central Orissa, we may come to the following conclusions. The martyr-*iṣṭadevatās* are connected with the foundation of the fort and represent the virile power over a territory which was subdued

by direct coercion. The powerful tribal *ṭhakurāṇī* is venerated by both - the ruler and his subjects - as the royal *iṣṭadevatā* or *rāṣṭradevatā* ("state deity") of the state as a whole. She represents the real overlord of the state and symbolizes the unifying link between the rājā and the tribe since both of them are subjects of this goddess. By accepting her as the royal *iṣṭadevatā* the rājā became the legitimate ruler of the state as a whole. And it was through these powerful tribal goddesses, many of which belong to the "Eight Mothers" of Orissa, that the legitimacy of the respective state was linked with the imperial and religious traditions of Orissa as a whole, thus elevating the status of the *rājās* and their *prajās*. The third "type", the subsidiary *iṣṭadevatā*, symbolizes authority over a particular region of the state. *Iṣṭadevatās* which are once a year brought to the royal forts, like the two Khiḷā Muṇḍas, document the rājās' claim to rule over a certain area and its population.

More generally speaking, the martyr-*iṣṭadevatā* represents the initial *violent coercion* to establish the power, the powerful tribal *rāṣṭradevatā* symbolizes the aspect of the *infinite power* over the state as a whole. And last but not least the "subsidiary" *iṣṭadevatās* represent the *local aspect* of power over a certain part or social group of the state.

THE CHRONICLES AND THE TEMPLE RECORDS OF THE MĀDAḶĀ PĀÑJI OF PURI.

A Reassessment of the Evidence[1]

Apart from the date of Khāravela, Orissa's first great king in the late first (or mid second?) century B.C., the *Mādaḷā Pāñji*, its nature, date and historicity still seem to be the most controversial issue of Orissan historiography. Ever since 1895, when the epigraphist J.F. Fleet wrote his scornful verdict against the *Mādaḷā Pāñji* that "everything relating to ancient times, which has been written on the unsupported authority of these annals, has to be expunged bodily from the pages of history",[2] historians, particularly in Orissa, have fallen apart into two parties in regard to the date and historicity of these chronicles.

R.P. Chanda's first attempt to analyse systematically various versions of the temple chronicle in 1926/1927[3] and A.B. Mahanti's edition of three versions of it in the year 1940[4] led to a more

---

[1] The present paper is the outcome of a research project jointly sponsored by the German Research Council, Bonn, and the Indian Council of Historical Research, New Delhi, and it is based on material collected by the former Orissa Research Project during its research on the cult of Jagannātha. The present article forms an abridged version of a part of the introduction to the critical edition of the *Kaṭakarājavaṃśāvalī* which is at present prepared by Dr. G.C. Tripathi and this author. The author acknowledges gratefully the help he received from Dr. G.C. Tripathi, the late Sri Kedarnath Mahapatra, Dr. Satyanarayan Rajguru, Prof. Dr. G.N. Dash and Dr. S.K. Panda.

[2] J.F. Fleet, Records of the Somavaṃśī Kings of Katak, in: *EI*, III, p. 338 (1895/96).

[3] R.P. Chanda, Notes from the Madala Panji - (Muhammadan Conquest of Orissa), in: *JBORS*, 13 (1927) 10-27.

[4] A.B. Mahanti, *Mādaḷā Pāñji. Rājabhoga Itihāsa*, Cuttack: Prachi Samiti 1940; 2nd ed. Bhubaneswar: Utkal University 1969.

scientific and critical evaluation of Puri's chronicles[5]. A.B. Mahanti's totally uncritical edition, however, had two serious repercussions, too. Firstly, his unscientific editorial work seems to have confirmed the assumption that the chronicles (at least those published by him) have been rewritten if not partly "fabricated" in the late 19th or even early 20th centuries. Secondly, the title *Mādaḷā Pāñji. Rājabhoga Itihāsa* under which he published the chronicles seems to have finally led to the equation of these chronicles with the Mādaḷā Pāñji. Both assumptions, however, are equally wrong. Neither have the chronicles been "rewritten" in the 19th century in a sinister conspiracy of the Karaṇas and the Rājās of Puri nor is the Mādaḷā Pāñji identical with these chronicles.

As regards the assumption that the Mādaḷā Pāñji as a whole or parts of it are a "product" of the mid or even late 19th century, it can easily be shown that this suspicion is totally unfounded. This assumption is based mainly on an alleged increase in the total number of Keśarī kings who, according to the chronicles of Puri, ruled over Orissa from the 5th to the early 12th centuries. K.C. Panigrahi, to whom we owe several important contributions to Mādaḷā Pāñji studies, summarized this assumption in his latest work: "The Kesari dynasty, the biggest of all ruling dynasties described by the Panji, provides the best example to show how later additions have swollen the size of this chronicle and have at the same time vitiated its originality. In the copy or copies used by Stirling in 1822[6] the total number of Kesari kings was 36. In 1872 when Hunter used the *same chronicle* (my emphasis) for his *History of Orissa*[7] their total number has increased to forty-four. In 1940 A.B. Mahanti published the Mādaḷa Pāñjī and in this published book the total number of the Keśarī kings is found to be sixty-

---

[5] See the chapter on "Mādaḷā Pāñji", in: *Orissa. A Comprehensive and Classified Bibliography* by H. Kulke in collaboration with G.N. Dash, M.N. Das and K.S. Behera, Cuttack: Vidyapuri 1981.

[6] A. Stirling, An Account, Geographical, Statistical and Historical of Orissa Proper, or Cuttack, in: *Asiatic Researches*, 15(1822) 163-338 (publ. 1825).

[7] W.W. Hunter, *Orissa: or the Vicissitudes of an Indian Province under Native and British Rule*, 2 vols., Calcutta 1872 (forms pt. 2 and 3 of his *The Annals of Rural Bengal*, London 1872).

five".[8] The basic mistake of this interpretation is the assumption that all these authors used *one* and the *same chronicle*. But as will be shown later, A. Stirling used for his writing on the history of Orissa mainly a Sanskrit version of the chronicle of Puri which was written in the year 1820. This chronicle has reduced the number of the previously known 44 Keśarī kings to 36. The only two manuscripts of this Sanskrit chronicle, however, were soon included into the Mackenzie Collection at Madras and London and thus disappeared from the scene till very recently when both manuscript were published.[9] In his *History of Orissa* (1872) W.W. Hunter used the Bengali rendering[10] of an Oriya chronicle of Puri instead which still stuck to the *older* system of 44 Keśarī kings. In 1940 A.B. Mahanti published two Oriya versions of the chronicle and one royal genealogy. All these three Oriya texts belong to the same old tradition which speaks of 44 generations of Keśarī kings. However, the names of these 44 generations of Keśarīs don't tally in these three manuscripts. Within one and the same generation of Keśarī kings sometimes two or even three different names of Keśarī kings can be found in these three manuscripts. For the sake of the readers A.B. Mahanti compiled a list of all these Keśarī names in the introduction of his publication. But he made the irremissible mistake to number these kings from 1 to 65 as if they ruled one after the other. But it is equally unintelligible that this mistake has not been realized earlier. Apparently this misleading list and the non-availability of the Sanskrit text of the year 1820/21, which has been used by A. Stirling, created this misunderstanding which, for decades, impaired the discussions about the Mādaḷā Pāñji and its chronicles. The constantly changing names of the Keśarī kings in these chronicles is certainly symptomatic of the historicity of these chronicles, at least in regard to the earlier periods of Orissan history. Nevertheless this fact should not be misused as a proof for

---

[8] F.C. Panigrahi, *History of Orissa*, Cuttack 1981, p. 128. For a detailed study of the "Madala Panji and the Kesari Kings" see also B.K. Rath, *Cultural History of Orissa*, Delhi 1983, p. 137-152; P. Acharya, The Kesari Dynasty of the Madalapanji, in: *JAS*, 4 (1962) 17-27.

[9] See below notes 18 and 19.

[10] Bh. Bandopadhyaya, *Purushottama Chandrika*, Calcutta 1844.

a conspiracy of the priests and Rājās of Puri to have manipulated the chronicles of Puri for their own vested interest.

II

As has already been pointed out by R.P. Chanda and others,[11] the compilation of Puri's chronicles began around 1600 A.D., soon after the re-establishment of the Jagannātha cult and the foundation of the Bhoi dynasty of Khurda under Rāmacandra I as local successors to the erstwhile imperial Gajapati kings of Orissa. The beginning of Orissa's historical writing was thus directly linked to the reconstruction of Orissa's holy tradition, circling around Jagannātha, the "Lord of the World" and his earthly deputy, the Gajapati or "Lord of the Elephants". In 1568 A.D. this backbone of Orissa's regional tradition had been violently interrupted by the destruction of the holy images and the death of the last Gajapati.

Different versions of the chronicle and of royal genealogies were maintained by the Deuḷa Karaṇa and Taḍhau Karaṇa of the Jagannātha temple and by the Rājās of Khurda.[12] But the contents of these different versions of the chronicle neither were identical nor have they been written with the same accuracy. A study of the available versions seems to indicate that their writing was done rather irregularly. But it appears to be equally clear that whenever the cult had again been interrupted (e.g. in the early 17th century and around 1700 A.D. under Aurangzeb) these chronicles were again properly maintained. This irregular rhythm of writing the chronicles, as well as their maintainance in different Karaṇa families, may help to explain some of the inconsistencies in Puri's chronicles.[13]

---

[11] R.P. Chanda, op. cit., p. 12f; D.C. Sircar, The Mādaḷā Pāñji and the Pre-Sūryavamśī History of Orissa, in: *JIH,* 31 (1953) 233-246; K.C. Panigrahi, op. cit.: App. IV: Authenticity of the Madalapanji, the Temple Chronicle of Puri, p. 122-129; K.C. Panigrahi, *Itihāsa o kimbadanti*, Bhubaneswar 1954.

[12] A.B. Mahanti, op. cit., p. 1 mentions in his introduction that he received copies of the chronicles from these three places in Puri whereas R.P. Chanda received the manuscripts which he consulted only from the two Karaṇas in Puri (op. cit., p. 11).

[13] For more details of this history of the chronicles of Puri see the following chapter.

III

The imbalance in maintaining and writing of these chronicles increased considerably during the first two decades after the conquest of Orissa by the East India Company in 1803. Initially the Company took over for a few years the direct administration of the Jagannātha temple. Therefore two Collectors at Puri, Groeme and Webb[14], were requested to submit comprehensive reports about the Jagannātha cult which they did in 1805 and 1807 respectively. In their search for all kinds of information about the property, administration and the rituals of the Jagannātha temple, chronicles and other records of the temple were consulted by these British officers and their local assistents.[15] During these years the priestly administrators and Karaṇas of Puri and a few years later particularly the Rājā of Puri seem to have become aware of the importance of their own records and chronicles vis-a-vis their new foreign rulers.

Another major impact of early British administration on Puri's historical writing came only a few years later. In connection with his unique survey of the Madras Presidency, Colonel Colin Mackenzie sent his pandits also to Puri in search of manuscripts and documents, as the Jagannātha cult played an important role in the northern parts of the Madras Presidency, too. The pandits collected and copied Sanskrit and Oriya Māhātmyas and chronicles

---

14 Reports of Webb and Groeme "Accounts of the Puri Temple, Collection of the Tax from the Pilgrims etc.", *Jagannath Temple Correspondence,* Vol. VIII, Board of Revenue Cuttack.

15 "In charge of the Deul Kurn [*deuḷa karaṇa*] or accountant of the temple, there is a Panjee or bundle of leaves called Karmanee Potee, in which is written the duties of every description of a Shewuk [*sevaka*] or servant of the temple, and it is an established rule that they perform these ceremonies and conform to the line of conduct therein laid down." Report of Charles Groeme, Collector, Jagurnath, 10th June 1805, submitted to Thomas Fortescue, Secretary to Commissioner, Cuttack.

and translated a large number of these texts into Telugu.[16] Most important, however, was that Mackenzie's pandits may even have induced or arranged the composition of a new Sanskrit chronicle, in fact the only Sanskrit chronicle so far known in Puri. The only two existing manuscripts of this chronicle were once part of the Mackenzie Collection.[17] One manuscript still belongs to this collection at Madras and was recently published by K.C. Mishra under the title *Oḍradeśa Rājavaṃṣāvalī*[18]. This manuscript, however, contains several mistakes and big lacunae (e.g. from the mid of the Gaṅga dynasty up to Puruṣottama, the second ruler of the Sūryavaṃśa). The second manuscript is known under the name *Kaṭakarājavaṃśāvalī* and belongs now to the India Office Library. It is in an excellent condition and has recently been edited by G.C. Tripathi and this author.[19]

This Sanskrit chronicle has several important pecularities. First of all it is clearly dated in the colophon by Kaliyuga 4921 = 1820/21 A.D. Furthermore, its enumeration of the kings of Orissa follows a very strict system of highly symbolical numbers. For instance Rāmacandra III, the contemporary Rājā of Puri was the 108th king of Orissa. The author of this chronicle retained the number of 18 Gaṅga kings as known from earlier Oriya chronicles (historically 15 are known) and reduced accordingly the number of the Keśarī kings from 44, as given in the earlier Oriya chronicles,

---

16 For the Mackenzie Collection and the texts collected from Orissa see: H.H. Wilson, *Mackenzie Collection. A Descriptive Catalogue of Oriental Manuscripts,* Calcutta 1828 (2nd ed. 1882); W. Taylor, *Catalogue Raisonné. Oriental Manuscripts in the Library of the (late) College Fort Saint George.* Vol. I. Madras 1857.

17 There exists a Telugu rendering of the Sanskrit chronicle registered under the name *Genealogy of the Kings of Oḍra Deśa* which is also known as *Jagannātha Kaifiat.* This Telugu text preserved in the Local Records, vol. 60, pp. 245-320, at the Government Oriental Manuscript Library at Madras (GOMLM).

18 K.C. Mishra (ed.), *Oḍradesharājavaṃśāvalī*, Bhubaneswar 1983. The text belongs to the Local Records (vol. 60, pp. 303-357) of the GOMLM and is named in its catalogue as "Genealogy of the Kings of Oḍra Deśa".

19 *Kaṭakarājavaṃśāvalī* ed. by K.C. Tripathi and H. Kulke in: *J. of the Ganganātha Jha Kendriya Sanskrit Vidyapeetha*, 40 (1984) 1-120. The text belongs to the India Office Library, London, Mackenzie Collection, II, 102. (Received at London September 14th, 1825).

to the sacred number of 36. But even more significant is the fact that this Sanskrit chronicle is the only hitherto available chronicle which does not only count the regnal or aṅka years, but provides also the Śaka years of all kings of Orissa. Although there existed already an earlier, but merely genealogical list with Śaka dates written in Oriya,[20] the achievement of the author of the Sanskrit chronicle was considerable. Its systematic organization of the material has to be regarded as the culmination of traditional historical writing of Orissa. But it leaves out a number of interesting historical details of the 17th and 18th centuries known from the Oriya chronicles. Moreover it contains an interesting disimprovement which, however, helps to verify its date of composition.[21]

IV

The years around 1820, however, do not only mark the culmination of traditional historical writing of Orissa, but signify the beginning of modern historical writing of Orissa, too. In 1822 A. Stirling published his "Account, Geographical, Statistical and Historical of Orissa Proper, or Cuttack". The introduction to his third chapter on the history of Orissa contains a list of source material used by him. This list is of the greatest importance as it throws some light on the different versions of the chronicles of Orissa. Stirling wrote: "The sources from which my information has been chiefly derived are, 1st. A work in Sanscrit called the Vansavali, belonging to a learned brahmin of Puri, said to have been originally composed by some of his ancestors three or four centuries back, and continued down in the family to the present date. 2nd. The chapter of the Mandala (sic) Panji or Records

---

[20] "3rd pāñji" published by A.B. Mahanti. According to his rather unclear introduction, A.B. Mahanti received the copy of this genealogy from the palace of the Rājā of Puri. The Telugu genealogy has the name *Account of the Gaṅgavaṃśa of Oḍra-deśa* and belongs to the Local Records, vol. 47, pp. 9-14.

[21] For instance it mixes up Mānsingh, Akbar's famous Rajput general, with "Siwai Jaya Simha". Jai Singh II (c. 1700-1743) received the title "Sawai" in the year 1713. According to a chāmu ciṭāu in the *Jagannātha Sthalavṛttāntam* (GOMLM, D. No. 2612) "Savai Jayasimgu from Dilli" (sic!) visited Puri for a darśana of Jagannātha on 10.4.1740. Apart from its date 1820/21, this is another reason why the *Kaṭakarājavaṃśāvalī* must have been written only a considerably long time *after* 1740.

preserved in the temple of Jagannath, called Raj Charitra or 'Annals of the Kings' in the Uria language, which records are stated to have been commenced upon more than six centuries back, and to have been since regularly kept up. 3rd. Another Vansavali or Genealogy written in Sanscrit on leaves of the Palmyra tree, procured from a brahmin living in the family of the Raja of Puttia [Patia] Sarengarh, one of the branches of the royal house of Orissa. Less certain and trust-worthy guides than the above, are to be met with in numerous Genealogies, or Bansabali Pothis, as they are vulgarly termed, possessed by nearly every Panjia or Almanac maker in the province. They in general abound with errors and inconsistencies, but occasionally a few facts or illustrations may be gleaned from them."[22]

It is possible to identify Stirling's "sources of information" with a high degree of likelihood. An analysis of Stirling's writing and the contents of the presently available chronicles makes it very clear that the Sanskrit Vamśāvalī which he mentioned as his first source was one of the above mentioned Sanskrit chronicles - most probably the more complete one which belongs now to the India Office Library. This hypothesis may be further verified by the fact that these two manuscripts are the only hitherto known texts of a Sanskrit version which, moreover, bears the name *vaṃśāvalī* as mentioned by Stirling. Furthermore, both these Sanskrit manuscripts have been included in the contemporary Mackenzie Collection. Although nothing definite is yet known about direct links between the manuscripts used by A. Stirling and those belonging to the Mackenzie Collection, there is at least one clear evidence for a direct connection. As we just saw, Stirling refers to the Temple Records as *Mandala* Panji. This strange misspelling of the word Mādaḷā as Mandala occurs also as a title of an Oriya manuscript preserved in the Mackenzie Collection: "XIII -*Mandala* Panji. Palm leaves. A portion of the records of the temple of Jagannath, containing the legend of its first establishment by Indradyumna and the rules prescribed by Brahma for the ceremonies to be observed there."[23]

---

[22] A. Stirling, op. cit. p. 236.

[23] H.H. Wilson, op. cit. (1st edition) vol. II, p. 105.

As regards Stirling's second source, already in 1927 R.P. Chanda has pointed out that he was unable "to trace the manuscript of the Oriya Rajacharitra used by Stirling." But the analysis of Stirling's history of Orissa makes it likely that he used a manuscript which was similar to the first version published by A.B. Mahanti. Moreover, it is also quite likely that the Rājacharitra used by Stirling was one of those Oriya manuscripts which formerly had belonged to the Mackenzie Collection and which in 1938, after the formation of the province of Orissa, were sent to the Hon. Secretary of the Orissa Academy at Ravenshaw College at Cuttack.[24] Stirling's third source which he had "procured from a brahmin living in the family of the Raja of Puttia Sarengarh" near Cuttack is most probably identical with a Vaṃśāvalī translated by A. Stirling and published posthumously in 1837 by the editors of the Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal.[25] And, finally, the Telugu translation of one of those "less certain and trustworthy Bansabali Pothis" which Stirling mentions to have consulted is known to be part of the Mackenzie Collection.[26]

V

It will be a matter of further research to find out to what extent the genuine historical interest of A. Stirling, the Secretary to the Commissioner at Cuttack, was encouraged by Mackenzie's pandits and their search for historical records, - or whether Stirling himself influenced or even induced Mackenzie's pandits to get the new and "better" Sanskrit version of the chronicle written by a Brahmin of Puri. Whoever was the author of the Sanskrit version, he would

---

[24] According to a personal information which I received in the State Archives in Madras in 1971 about 137 manuscripts (pertaining to Orissa and mostly in Oriya) have been sent in 1938 to the Hon. Secretary of the Orissa Academy, Ravenshaw College, Cuttack.

[25] A. Stirling, History of the Rajas of Orissa, from the Reign of Yudhishtira, translated from the Vansavali, in: *JASB*, 1837, pp. 756-766. This otherwise very corrupted text contains a very clear hint to Padmanabha Deva of Patia who occupied the Gajapati throne of Khurda for a few years in the early 18th century.

[26] [Genealogical Account of] *Puruṣottamadeva*, Mackenzie Collection, vol. 9, fol. 7-10a.

certainly have used older Oriya sources "composed by some of his ancestors three or four hundred centuries back and continued down in the family to the present date", as reported by A. Stirling. A major problem in this regard is the uncertainty about the date of Mackenzie's activities in Orissa. The survey of the "Northern Sircars" and the Ganjam District, which belonged to the Madras Presidency, certainly had begun not later than the years 1803 and 1804 when translations of a few Telugu texts were prepared by pandits working for Colonel Mackenzie. To these belong an "Account of the Generation of the Guzzaputtyvors descended from the Gunga in the Juggunnaud Dashem, translated from Tellinga Account communicated to Mr. Blake in 1803",[27] the "Historical Account of the Calinga Mahatavam",[28] and the "Translation of the Mahatmya of Jagenaad 1804".[29] Moreover, several reports on the Ganjam District and its princely states are dated between 1814 and 1816.[30] Yet little is known about possible activities of Mackenzie's pandits and the date of arrival in Central Orissa and the Puri region after its conquest in September 1803. All the early texts referring to Puri, which belong at present to the Mackenzie Collection appear to have been collected or translated from Telugu

---

27 India Office Library, Mackenzie Collection, General, vol VII. Documents Relating to the Telugu Country, No. 8, pp. 181-188. The handwritten manuscript moreover contains the note "Athur Garland Blake, registered to Zillah Court at Guntoor 1803". The manuscript contains a very distorted genealogy from "Chodunga" to "Capela" (Kapileśvara) similar to those designated by A. Stirling as "less certain and trustworthy Bansabali Pothis".

28 ibid., No. 30. On the last page the date is given as "Dec. 1803 Mar(?) 1804". It contains in about 100 pages the legendary accounts and history of the Pusapatis etc. of Kaliṅga.

29 IOL, Mackenzie Collection, Translations, Class I, Persian, No. 37. The handwritten manuscript of 35 small pages has 5 adhyāyas. It contains a very distorted contents of a Puruṣottamamahātmya.

30 The *Laṅguleśvara Itihāsa* about the Khimundi Princely States (Local Records, vol. 37, p. 409-498) was translated from Oriya into Telugu on 2.1.1814. The report into which it was included is dated 26.6.1814. An account of the *Khallikota Zamindar* (LR, vol. 59, p. 35-52) which is situated near the Chilka Lake is dated 1.5.1814 and the *Account of Ganzam* (LR, vol. 9, p. 372-458) contains several dates between 1.5. and 18.7.1815, whereas the text *Barabati Vīrakṛṣṇadeva* (LR, vol. 6, p. 1-41), which refers mainly to Parlakhemundi, is dated 11.9.1816.

in the Ganjam District and further South[31] and belong to "less trustworthy" chronicles. However, there exists in the Mackenzie Collection a large number of drawings from Orissa, depicting mainly sculptures at Jajpur, Bhubaneswar and Puri. These drawings were prepared during a "journey from Bengal thro' the Woodia & Calinga Daum for the Coromandel Coast" from March to September 1815.[32] Furthermore, we know an excellent drawing of the "procession at the Temple Jagannath in July 1818"[33] which belongs to the Mackenzie Collection, too. All this points to an increasing interest of Mackenzie and his pandits in Puri and its Jagannātha cult from 1814/15 onwards.[34]

The year 1820, just one year before Mackenzie died, seems to have been of decisive importance. Due to his already badly weakened health, Mackenzie spent more than four months at Puri (22.5. to 18.10.1820). But "he was of no means idle, and kept in touch with surveyors in all parts of India", got texts translated, travelled to Bhubaneswar and Konarak and was in continuous contact with Benjamin Buxton, Surveyor at Cuttack and himself a gifted draftsman.[35] Therefore all the ten drawings of the year 1820 which belong to the Mackenzie Collection are dated between 27.5. and 13.9.1820,[36] a period which coincides exactly with Mackenzie's stay at Puri. Whether this - still incomplete - evidence about a clear

---

[31] An answer to this question may be possible only after "rediscovering" and consulting those Oriya manuscripts which were sent to the Orissa Academy at Cuttack in 1938 (see above note 24).

[32] M. Archer, *British Drawings in the India Office Library*, 1969, vol. I, p. 533.

[33] ibid., plate 26.

[34] On March 8th, 1814 an (unnamed) pandit reached "Rumbhah" at the Chilka lake where he got in touch with "the Zemendar of Catak capital" and on April 1st to 6th "he was enquiring the informations of ancient kings, translating some Grants from Odrah into Tellinga" (IOL, Mack. Coll., Unbound Translations, Class XII, No. 6a).

[35] R.H. Phillimore, *Historical Records of the Survey of India, vol. III, 1815-1830*, Dehra Dun 1950, p. 474-483. - Vol. II which covers the period 1800-1815 does not refer to central Orissa at all. I am grateful to Mr. Martin Brandtner for this information.

[36] M. Archer, op. cit., p. 496ff.

culmination of Mackenzie's activities in Puri in the year 1820 suffices to infer that the important Sanskrit chronicle of the year 1820/21, too, was composed under the influence or even by order of Mackenzie, is difficult to decide. But, according to the evidence which is now at our disposal, this possibility cannot be ruled out completely.

Whatever the truth, it is certain that A. Stirling had been on the spot in Orissa since October 10th, 1817, shortly after Mackenzie had finally arrived at Calcutta (18.8.1817) as Surveyor General of India, a post to which he had already been appointed in 1815. Mackenzie's interest in Central Orissa and Puri certainly increased after his transfer to Calcutta,[37] and Stirling seems to have begun his study of the history soon after his arrival in Cuttack. Already on October 25th, 1821 his comprehensive "Minute" on the land system in Orissa and its history had been printed. While preparing this "Minute", Stirling seems to have had not yet access to the Sanskrit chronicle of the year 1820/21[38] which was to become the major source of his History of Orissa which he completed in the year 1822. The question as to whether Mackenzie or Stirling directly or indirectly had influenced a Brahmin in Puri to compose the "new" Sanskrit chronicle, therefore, still remains a matter of further research and depends on the discovery of new material. But it seems to be evident that Mackenzie's devotion to or even obsession with collecting historical documents and Stirling's deep interest in the history of Orissa must have had a deep impact on

---

[37] In a personal communication of 28.8.1986, Nicholas B. Dirks informed me that "although I believe that Mackenzie's pundits only began to collect systematically any materials from Orissa after Mackenzie himself was transferred to Calcutta in 1817, there are some letters and reports from a Telugu Brahman writer by name of Ram Doss who travelled in the 'Kalinga country' between 10th November and 25th May 1818".

[38] In this *Minute*, p. 62 (reprinted as appendix to: *OHRJ*, IX, 3/4 (1960) and X, 1/2 (1961) Stirling pointed out that according to "the chapters in the records of the Temple of Juggunath, called Raj Charitra or Annals of the King of Orissa .... the Kesaree Dynasty reigned from about A.D. 470 to 1132 A.D." In his History of Orissa of the year 1822 Stirling, however, always refered to the Śaka year 396 (=474 A.D., which however he wrongly dates 473 A.D.) as the beginning of the rule of the Keśaris. This date confirms exactly with the Śaka date given in the Sanskrit Chronicle which became Stirling's "first source" in his History of Orissa of the year 1822.

their contemporary counterparts at Puri.[39] This impact seems to have led to a stronger awareness of their own historical tradition and, at least in the case of the author of the Sanskrit Vaṃśāvalīs, to an attempt to systematize this tradition. This systematization, however, was still done according to indigenous and Brahmanical standards and norms and was based solely on local material. It was thus neither "fabricated" under direct British influence (as were certainly later attempts of historical writings of Feudatory States of Orissa) nor was it influenced by European ideas of history. This conclusion will become even more evident when we now turn our attention to the Temple Records of Puri, the "veritable" Mādaḷā Pāñji.

VI

While conducting research on the Jagannātha cult, the former Orissa Research Project[40] was able to purchase on 24.12.1970 a collection of about 15,000 palm-leaves from R.K. Samantaray, the Deuḷa Karaṇa of Puri. On 8.2.1971 the Project informed the Government of Orissa about this acquisition and the intention of the Project to utilize this collection for research and to donate it then to an institution suggested by the Government of Orissa. On 13.2.71 R.K. Rath, IAS, Secretary, Cultural Affairs Department, in a letter suggested to make over these manuscripts to the Orissa State Museum. The Orissa Research Project soon engaged copyists who copied about one fourth of the whole collection during the next twelve months. On 10.3.1972, however, the Vigilance Police seized the whole collection as the Deuḷa Karaṇa was accused of

---

[39] In this connection it is worthwhile to mention that the "first pāñji" published by A.B. Mahanti continues the history of Orissa up to "1818 (when) the British took over Orissa around Khurda completely" (A.B. Mahanti, op. cit., p. 82). According to Mahanti's introductory genealogical tables (op. cit., p. 12) the three chronicles even seem to have been written up to the Śaka year 1743 = 1821/22 A.D. This information however is not corroborated by the texts published by Mahanti (op. cit., p. 83). This strange discrepancy is one of the many examples which show how carelessly A.B. Mahanti edited these chronicles. - The year 1820/21 A.D., when the Sanskrit chronicles (KRV and ODRV) were composed, occurs also as the final date of one of the chronicles which R.P. Chanda received from the Deuḷa Karaṇa (R.P. Chanda, op. cit., p. 11)

[40] A. Eschmann, H. Kulke, G.C. Tripathi (ed.), *CJ*.

not having been allowed to sell these manuscripts. But on 12.8.1974 the whole collection was returned to the Orissa Research Project which, as previously agreed upon, handed it over to the Orissa State Museum at a formal function presided over by Mr. Jadunath Das Mahapatra, Minister of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Government of Orissa.

During these years most probably none of those scholars and institutions which came into contact with the vast collection of manuscripts had a clear idea of the nature of these large bundles of palm-leaves. The Orissa Research Project had purchased it in the belief and on the assurance of the Deuḷa Karaṇa that it formed the Mādaḷā Pāñji or contained at least substantial portions of it. But soon it turned out that it was a "mere" collection of mostly rather recent temple records of the 19th and 20th centuries. During these years the view was gradually gaining ground (and this is still the prevailing conviction in Orissa) that these temple *records* have little or nothing to do with the famous Mādaḷā Pāñji which was unanimously identified with the above mentioned temple *chronicles*.

VII

More recent research conducted on the basis of those copies taken in the year 1971-1972 gave a very different and much more differentiated picture of the temple records. It became soon evident that they pertained to a vast range of subjects, e.g. accounts of daily donations to the temple, landed property of the temple and maṭhas of Puri, investiture (*śādhī bandha*) of priests (*sevaka*) and mahants, ritual regulations, and royal letters (*chāmu ciṭāu*) or orders (*talapa, hukuma*) of the Rājā of Puri granting special privileges to feudatory rājās during their visits to the Jagannātha temple. Although quite a large number of these records belonged to the 19th and even early 20th centuries, an equally large number can be dated to the 18th and few even to the early 17th centuries. It was thus obvious that this collection formed a substantial part of the temple records of Puri. They had been regularly maintained by the ancestors of the present Deuḷa Karaṇa at least since the early 17th century after the renewal of the Jagannātha Cult.

In 1978 the late Kedarnath Mahapatra, author of the *Khurudhā Itihāsa*[41] and former Curator of Manuscripts of the Orissa States Museum, and the present author began a systematic study of the royal letters *(chāmu ciṭāu)*. The author remembers well the sheer enthusiasm of Shri Kedarnath Mahapatra about the discovery of roughly 80 such royal letters from the 17th to the early 20th centuries granting privileges to members of about 30 princely and royal families in Orissa and north India.[42] These records contain other important historical documents, particularly in regard to the Maratha rule in Orissa and their relation to the Jagannātha cult. K.N. Mahapatra was very excited when he discovered the original of an important document about which his teacher Paramananda Acharya had long ago published an article under the title "An Oriya Letter from the Madala Panji Relating to Raghujī Bhonla's March to Orissa and Bengal in 1743 A.D.".[43] P. Acharya wrote this article on the basis of a (as we now know) rather poor copy of this document. The original document enabled K.N. Mahapatra to correct the date of this inroad of the Marathas to 16.5.1745. There are other interesting details to be found in the original which were missing in the copy available to P. Acharya. From the original we learn that Raghujī and Mīr Habib entered Orissa with 200.000 horse soldiers (*dui lakṣya*) and that they requested the priests at Puri to continue to "serve the Great Lord (Jagannātha) like the debtor is serving the creditor without fear" (*tumbhemāne kichi kathāku bichāra na kari khātaka jamā hoiñ parameśvaraṅku sebā karithiba*).[44] Another long document of the temple records reports on an event which hitherto was completely unknown. It relates the

---

[41] K.N. Mahapatra, *Khurudhā Itihāsa (1568-1817)*, Bhubaneswar 1969.

[42] With the help of Dr. S.K. Panda about 40 more *chāmu ciṭāus* have meanwhile been identified. Furthermore, about 30 letters are known from the *Jagannātha Sthalavṛttāntam*. A critical edition of all these *chāmu ciṭāus* is at present being prepared by H. Kulke in collaboration with Prof. G.N. Dash.

[43] P. Acharya, An Oriya Letter from the Madala Panji Relating to Raghuji Bhonsla's March to Orissa and Bengal in 1743, in: *Proceedings of the Indian Historical Records Commission*, Jaipur, vol. XXIV, p. 115 ff (repr. in: P. Acharya, *Studies in Orissan History, Archaeology and Archives*, Bhubaneswar 1969, pp. 245-250).

[44] The text published by P. Acharya mentions only the last three words of this sentence.

fantastic story of Jagannātha Narayāṇa Deva, Raja of Parlakhemundi, who entered Puri during the carfestival (*ratha yātrā*) in 1753 on his royal elephant in the company of 2,000 men. He managed to capture by force the Nandighoṣa car of Lord Jagannātha and then tried to perform the Gajapati Sevā in order to claim the Gajapati kingship for himself. The document nicely describes how the priests of Puri tacitly boycotted him for several days so that he finally had to come to a compromise with Mohana Singh, the able Maratha general who was present at Puri.[45] So far it had been known (mainly from the first chronicle published by A.B. Mahanti) that Jagannātha Narāyaṇa, in his attempt to seize the Gajapati kingship, had attacked Khurda with an army in the year 1760 and that he was driven out by the Marathas on request of the Khurda Rājā. It is still unclear how to correlate these two events. The first "visit" to Puri might have just been a prelude to Narāyaṇa's attempt to capture the Gajapati kingship by military force. But it is also possible that both reports refer to one and the same event. Another document of the temple records shows that already in 1768 the Marathas themselves, under the Governor Śambhujī Gaṇeśa, took over the Gajapati sevā during the ratha yātrā, thus more or less ousting Vīrakeśarī Deva, the Khurda Rājā, from his privileged position in the Jagannātha cult. But another document shows that the Governor Rājarāma Paṇḍita reinstalled him again officially on the throne in 1780. None of these important facts have been known so far from other sources.[46] K.N. Mahapatra was the first scholar to realize the genuineness of these documents and their immense value for the history of Orissa under Moghul and particularly Maratha rule. Further comparative research on the temple records and the chronicles led to the final conclusion that the temple records which had been purchased from the Deuḷa Karaṇa of Puri and which are now in the custody of the Orissa State Museum are indeed the genuine Mādaḷā Pāñji.

---

[45] For details see above chapter 5.

[46] In his *Khurudhā Itihāsa* K.M. Mahapatra comes to the conclusion that "it is not known from any source whether Vīrakeśarī got back his throne at Khurda or not" (p. 106).

VIII

This "discovery", however, is by no means completely new. Already the early British administrators had a clear knowledge of the existence and the very nature of the temple records. The first clear reference to the Mādaḷā Pāñji came from William Trower, Collector at Puri, who was fighting against the alleged presumptuousness of Mukunda Deva, the Rājā of Puri, who recently had been reinstalled as Superintendent of the Jagannātha Temple. In a letter to J. Richardson, Member on deputation to the Board of Revenue at Cuttack, he complained on March 18th, 1814:

> The Rajah of Khoordah on all occasions where he wishes to give trouble quotes 'Madla Panjee' or record of the temple, but whenever his interest is concerned to forget them, they are nor mentioned. The Madla Panjee are properly speaking a set of rules for the duties to be performed to the Idol by the priests and Shewaks [*sevakas*] and have nothing to do with the visits of the pilgrims. In ancient times it was customary to enter on the records of the temple the day and the year on which any of the neighbouring Rajahs visited the idol and the mode in which he did it, but I am informed by the Purchas [*parīkṣa*] that this has long been discontinued and has nothing to do with the rules to be observed. These records are also known by the name of Madla Panjee, as well as every order issued by the existing Government, Regulations of the British Government relating to the temple are Madla Panjee and the Rajah wishes every order issued by himself to be considered the same.[47]

William Trower, the Collector at Puri, thus clearly identified the "Madla Panjee" as the whole corpus of Puri's temple records. From his description it is evident that Trower referred to a corpus of temple records of exactly the same nature as we know it meanwhile from the collection which the Orissa Research Project had purchased from the Deuḷa Karaṇa in 1970. What Trower regarded as a presumption of Rājā Mukunda Deva ("the Rajah wishes every order issued by himself to be considered as the same", viz. the Mādaḷā Pāñji) was in fact, as we are now able to discern from

---

[47] W. Trower to J. Richardson, 18.3.1814, *Jagannath Temple Correspondence*, vol. I. Board of Revenue, Cuttack.

these records, in full agreement with the long established rights of the Rājās of Puri. Equally correct is the information, which Trower must have got from one of Puri's Karaṇas, that "in ancient times it was customary to enter on the records of the temple the day and the year on which any of the neighbouring Rajahs visited the Idol and the mode in which he did it....". The *chāmu ciṭāus* which meanwhile have been identified in the Mādaḷā Pāñji temple records tally exactly with Trower's description. From his long description it is evident that this earliest reference to the Mādaḷā Pāñji does not refer to the temple *chronicles* but to the temple *records* as a whole. This interpretation is confirmed by A. Stirling's list about the sources he used for his History of Orissa. In this list he clearly distinguished (under No. 2) between the "Mandala Panji or Records preserved in the temple of Juggernaut" and a chapter of these Records called "Raj Charitra or Annals of the Kings."

IX

The name "Mādaḷā Pāñji" is revealing, too. M. Chakravarti and R.P. Chanda, the earliest Indian scholars who worked systematically on the Mādaḷā Pāñji, gave two different explanations. Chakravarti wrote in 1916: "The meaning of *Mādaḷā* is not yet known. It is derived, I think, from *mudala*, sealed with *mudi* or ring. The word *mudalena* is used in inscriptions, e.g. Baidi-Mahāsenāpati-mudalena (*JASB*, 1895, p. 149) ... Compare also *Mudrasta*, *mudra* and *hasta*, seal-handed, an officer in the temple of Jagannātha whose duty is to seal the temple doors at the end of the daily ceremonies. Mādaḷā Pāñji would thus mean a chronicle of the (royal) orders."[48] R.P. Chanda concluded that "the word *mādaḷā* means drum, and the palm-leaf records of the Temple of Jagan-

---

[48] M. Chakravarti, Notes on the Geography of Orissa in the Sixteenth Century, in: *JASB, N.S.*, 12 (1916), p. 29. In his article "Mādaḷa Pāñji: Rāj Bhog" G.N. Dash referred to a different interpretation: "In 1964, I stated that most probably the word "Mādaḷā" has been derived from the Telugu word "Modaḷuga" meaning "from the beginning", or "Modaḷi" meaning "the first". Then the phrase "Mādaḷā Pāñji" would mean either the record in which information is given from the very beginning or a record that has been maintained from the very beginning. [*The Konark*, vol. III, 1/2 (1964)]" G.N. Dash furthermore pointed out that in the Cakaḍa Pothi of the 17th century the word "Mādaḷā" most probably means "king" or "chief". (Second Interim Report of the Orissa Research Project, Heidelberg 1973).

nath are so called because they are tied together in the form of big round bundles resembling an Indian drum."[49] An impartial observer will most probably agree with R.P. Chanda's explanation. The unusual size of the palm-leaves of these records and the way they are kept are certainly in favour of the "drum explanation". The palm-leaves have the astonishing length of 55-57 cm. About 40 such palm-leaves[50] are bound together in a small bundle. About 8 to 12 such small bundles are then tied together in a big bundle with strings on both ends. The outer appearence of these big bundles indeed clearly resembles a mādaḷā or drum. But M. Chakravarti's attempt to derive the name from *mudala* or *mudrā* (seal) (in Oriya also *muda*) seems to be equally appropriate in the context of the Puri temple records. They are indeed in their larger part royal orders concerning various aspects of the temple administration, economy and ritual. But these two interpretations don't exclude each other. It is quite possible that initially the word *mudala* which according to D.C. Sircar "is used in some inscriptions in the sense of royal order"[51] was associated with this collection of royal orders. Only later on this name and meaning have been distorted to the more popular interpretation of "drum pāñji". But there is one point worth mentioning in connection with our attempt to distinguish more precisely between the Mādaḷā Pāñji as the whole corpus of Puri's temple records and the chronicles or Vaṃśāvalīs which formed only a small though significant part of these records. Both explanations of the name *mādaḷā* refer to the temple records as a whole and not to the chronicles which neither consist of royal orders (*mudala*) nor do they look like drums (*mādaḷā*) as the big bundles of the temple records.

Before concluding with a few more general remarks on the historical significance of these temple records it should be mentioned that most historians seem to have been aware of the fact that the chronicles formed only a part of the Mādaḷā Pāñji Temple Records. Thus R.P. Chanda wrote in 1927: "The Mādaḷā Pāñjis

---

49 R.P. Chanda, op. cit., p. 10.

50 40 palm-leaves is the average but there are bundles with 20 or even 100 palm-leaves.

51 D.C. Sircar, *Epigraphical Glossary,* New Delhi 1966, p. 204.

include all classes of records relating to the Temple of Jagannath, such as inventories of articles in the stores, duties of different classes of temple servants, routine of ceremonies, copies of orders of the Gajapati Maharajas of Orissa who are the hereditary trustees of the Temple, and the annals of the Maharajas."[52] And in another context he speaks of "the *annals included in the Mādaḷā Pāñji* (henceforward named as the Puri annals)".[53] In his above-mentioned work on the history of Orissa, C. Panigrahi comes to a very similar conclusion about the nature of the Mādaḷā Pāñji, "The Madalapanji is a traditional work preserved in the temple of Jagannatha at Puri in palm-leaf manuscripts and mainly dealing with the affairs of that temple. It has however a *section, known as Raja-bhoga*, which professes to deal with the history of the ruling dynasties of Orissa."[54]

But despite this clear distinction and description of the nature of the Mādaḷā Pāñji, both authors deal exclusively with the chronicles, whereas the temple records are not even mentioned except in these few lines just quoted. The titles of their contributions "Notes from the Mādaḷā Pāñji" (Chanda) and "Authenticity of the Madala Panji, the temple chronicle of Puri" (Panigrahi) are therefore, strictly speaking, inaccurate in the former and misleading in the latter case. The same is true with the titles of the otherwise excellent articles of D.C. Sircar "The Mādaḷā Pāñji and the Pre-Sūryavaṃśī History of Orissa"[55] and "The Mādaḷāpāñji and Jīvadeva's Bhaktibhāgavata".[56] Both are dealing with these subjects exclusively on the basis of the chronicles of Puri and not the Mādaḷā Pāñji Temple Records.

---

[52] R.P. Chanda, op. cit., p. 10.

[53] ibid., p. 11 (emphasis mine).

[54] K.C. Panigrahi, op. cit., p. 122 (my emphasis).

[55] D.C. Sircar, The Mādaḷā Pāñji and the Pre-Suryavaṃśī History of Orissa, in: *JIH*, 31 (1953) 233-246.

[56] D.C. Sircar, The Mādalāpāñjī and Jīvadeva's Bhaktibhāgavata, in: *JASB*, 4 (1962) 9-16.

X

One may rightly question the usefulness of these speculations about the mere name of the Mādaḷā Pāñji. Why should we not accept the firmly established name Mādaḷā Pāñji for Puri's famous chronicles, too? But it is my strong conviction that the exclusive use of the popular name Mādaḷā Pāñji for the temple chronicles only impedes the realization and acceptance of Puri's temple records as a major source not only of Orissan history during Mughal and Maratha period,[57] but also as a major or even *the* major source out of which the temple chronicles of Puri have been composed throughout the 17th, 18th and early 19th centuries.

Whereas previous research on the historicity of the temple chronicles was mainly restricted to a comparison with Persian chronicles[58] and early British documents, it will be a major task of future research to analyse Puri's chronicles in a critical comparison with Puri's temple records. A careful study most probably will reveal the truth of a principle of historical research: *Documents* like the temple records of Puri are sometimes nearer the "historical truth" than historical *writing* which were composed in a process of selecting some and excluding other information. As we have seen above, already a cursory study of both Puri's records and chronicles reveals that the latter indeed excluded interesting information which we are now able to detect in Puri's temple records.

XI

For the sake of future "Mādaḷā Pāñji Studies" a final remark on the terminology may be permitted. As already pointed out by early British administrators (Trower) and by historians (Stirling,

---

[57] According to the knowledge of the present author only Nityananda Patnaik published four documents which belong to the Mādaḷā Pāñji Temple Records of the Deuḷa Karaṇa of Puri: N. Patnaik, Administration of the Jagannath Temple in the 18th Century, in: *Man in India*, 43, 3 (1963) 214-217. The above mentioned article of Paramananda Acharya (note 43) is based only on a deficient copy of a document from these Temple Records.

[58] E.g. G.N. Dash, 'Baharistan-i-Ghayabi' as a Source of Orissan History, in: *J. of Berhampur University*, 4, 1 (1979) 11-17.

Chanda), the Mādaḷā Pāñji included a vast bulk of archive-like material (which resemble a mādaḷā-drum). But it included other manuscripts, too (which were usually of the normal size of palm-leaf manuscripts). As this whole corpus is known at least since the early 19th century as Mādaḷā Pāñji we should maintain this name in this broader context. If, however, we speak, as R.P. Chanda does very rightly, in plural of the Mādaḷā Pāñjis, it should refer only to those big bundles - the temple records.

As regards the chronicles, we should abstain from identifying only them with the Mādaḷā Pāñji. We may therefore talk either of the *Chronicles of the Mādaḷā Pāñji* or the *Chronicles of Puri*.[59] And for the sake of clarification and distinction between the various groups of chronicles we may furthermore distinguish between the Oriya and the Sanskrit chronicles. The Oriya chronicles should be called *Rājabhoga*[60] or, according to A.B. Mahanti, *Rājabhoga Ithihāsa*, whereas the Sanskrit chronicles should be entitled as *Rājavaṃśāvalīs*.

---

[59] R.P. Chanda speaks of the "Puri annals" (op. cit., p. 11).

[60] R.P. Chanda quoted three titles of the five Oriya versions which he consulted. These titles were "*Rajāmānaṅka rāya bhoga kāla.* The annals (lit. reigns) of kings" (A); "*Rājāmānaṅka rāyya-bhoga*" (B); and "*Kalīyuga rajāmānaṅka bhoga kalā.* Annals of the Kings of Kaliyuga" (C), op. cit., p. 11f.

REFLECTIONS ON THE SOURCES OF THE TEMPLE CHRONICLES OF THE MĀDAḶĀ PĀÑJĪ OF PURI

Ulrich Schneider always regarded the question of the lack of extensive historical writing in pre-Islamic India as one of the great challenges of Indology.[1] In one of his essays[2] he tried to find an answer in basic categories of Indian philosophy, especially in the cyclic worldview - from the doctrine of the transmigration of souls to the great cosmogonic cycles of the world. These beliefs had a decisive influence on Indian thinking since the time of the Upaniṣads[3] and prevented the development of genuine historical writing, because historical "events are not presented as something unique, but rather as something recurring. It is less a historical, but the *cyclic thinking* which forms the basic idea".[4]

The acquisition of parts of the temple archives of Puri from the temple accountant *(deula karaṇa)* in late 1970 by the Orissa Research Project and the beginning of intensive work on the Temple Chronicles of Puri was therefore inevitably a challenge for Ulrich Schneider, because in Orissa the late Middle Ages seem to have witnessed the beginnings of genuine historical writing. It is not surprising that Ulrich Schneider very soon became deeply

---

[1] The original article, published in the *Ulrich Schneider Festschrift*, was translated from German by Heiko Frese, Kiel. It is the result of a research project "Sources of Orissa Studies" which was carried out together with Dr. G.C. Tripathi, D. Litt., Allahabad. The author gratefully acknowledges the financial support from the Indian Council of Historical Research and the German Research Council and the advice and help he received from Dr. S.N. Rajaguru, Parlakhemundi, Prof. G.N. Dash and Dr. S.K. Panda, Berhampur.

[2] U. Schneider, Indisches Denken und sein Verhältnis zur indischen Geschichte, in: *Saeculum*, 9 (1958) 156-162.

[3] idem, Upaniṣad-Philosophie und früher Buddhismus, in: *Saeculum*, 18 (1967) 245-263.

[4] op. cit. (note 2), p. 160.

interested in the question of the origin of these chronicles, and by 1972 he had put down his observations in the first interim report.

In his contributions to this interim report[5] he cautiously suggested that East Asian influences on the cult of Jagannātha might have existed, and that such influences could have made a contribution to the rise of a historiographical tradition in Orissa. The close relationship of the medieval rulers of Orissa to the cult of Jagannātha is in this respect as important as the existence of a historiographical tradition in late medieval Orissa. Both facts were familiar to Schneider from the "mandate of heaven" *(t'ien-ming)* of the Chinese Emperor and the highly developed historiography of China.

Assam had a key position among all these observations. Since the seventh century there have been several traceable contacts via Assam between the Buddhist north of India and China - at the end of the eighth century probably even between a Buddhist king of the Bhaumakara dynasty of Orissa and the Chinese Court.[6] In Schneider's opinion these contacts became even more important when the Ahoms, who came from southern China in the thirteenth century, conquered Assam. According to Schneider the "mandate of heaven" and Chinese historiography possibly played a decisive role in an indirect East Asian influence via Assam on the cult of Jagannātha and the chronicles of Orissa. The kings of the Ahoms were called - among other titles - "Swargadeo" (Sanskrit: *svarga-deva*), which without doubt has its origin in the Chinese *t'ien-tsu* "son of heaven".[7] Furthermore, the famous Buranji Chronicles were written at their courts - according to Schneider also an evidence of the Chinese heritage. Moreover Schneider points out that at least since the 15th century direct relations existed between the Ahom kings and Orissa, when the Ahom King Dikiṅga Rājā (1497-1539) sent a delegation to king "Vikrama Sena of Orissa" (presumably

---

[5] idem, Ostasiatische Einflüsse auf den Jagannātha-Kult?, in: *Die hinduistische Tradition und ihre Bedeutung in der gegenwärtigen Entwicklungsphase Indiens. Eine interdisziplinäre Analyse, durchgeführt am Beispiel der Tempelstadt Puri in Orissa.* Sonderforschungsbereich 16, Orissa-Projekt, Mai 1972. First Interim Report, mimeogr., pp.1-14.

[6] N.K. Sahu, *Buddhism in Orissa,* Bhubaneswar 1958, p. 89.

[7] U. Schneider, op. cit. (note 5), p. 3.

King Pratāparudra Deva), which was provided with precious gifts for Jagannātha. In the 17th century, King Jayadhvaja Singh (1648-1663) invited a famous holy man from Cooch Behar, who had made a long pilgrimage to Puri, to the Assamese Court. Furthermore Schneider points out that in the time of the Assamese "Prime Minister" Bargohain (1662-1673) a separate post for historiography existed at the Assamese court.[8] More examples could be added. Śaṅkaradeva (1449-1568), the founder of Neo-Vaiṣṇavism in Assam, is said to have also made a long pilgrimage to Puri. There he met Caitanya before settling in Assam.[9] And from royal privilege letters of the temple records of Puri we know, for example, that in 1748 the king of Assam came with his followers to Puri.[10] Two years later a priest of the Jagannātha Temple was sent to the royal court of Assam by the Rājā of Khurda/Puri. He delivered "according to the tradition" four *sindhuā* cloths and a stole with the Gītagovinda woven in.[11] From this explicit reference to an existing tradition it can be concluded that these relations between Puri and Assam had already existed for some time.

Ulrich Schneider himself concluded that these facts were not yet sufficient to prove that the Assamese Buranjis stood godfather to the conception of the Mādaḷā Pāñjī and that the god-king relationship in Puri could also be traced back to Assamese examples. To clarify this with regard to the Temple Chronicles of Puri, an answer to the following questions would be necessary: "What is the real age of the Mādaḷā Pāñjī, especially of the Rāja Bhoga? And above all: Does the Puri chronicle, particularly its legendary part, have its origin in older prototypes or not?"[12] In this connection Schneider also pointed out that the influence of Islamic historical writing "on the conception of the Mādaḷā Pāñjī cannot be

---

[8] Ibid., p. 5 f.

[9] Maheswar Neog, *Śaṅkaradeva and His Times,* Gauhati 1965, pp. 115 f. and 376.

[10] MP, 2, 1, 7R

[11] MP, 3, 3, 15V.

[12] U. Schneider, op. cit. (note 5) p. 8.

excluded, especially, if the hypothesis could be confirmed that the chronicle is not older than the 16th century and that there had been no older prototypes or predecessors. The confirmation or rejection of this thesis can be expected as project work progresses further"[13]

II

However, in the course of the Orissa Research Project the expected clarifications were not achieved. Among other reasons, the temporary confiscation of the Mādaḷā Pāñjī from March 1972 to August 1974 made clear that all critical questions concerning the Temple Chronicles of Puri and the Mādaḷā Pāñjī still caused vehement controversies in Orissa. But in the further course of the project work the opinion that the origins of the Temple Chronicles of Puri could be dated in the late 16th or the early 17th century was confirmed.[14] The questions of possible predecessors and their further historical development, however, remained as unsettled as the question of possible external influences.

During recent years, questions of origin and historical development of these Chronicles have again become the subject of a small follow-up project. On the basis of the chronicles collected and copied by the Orissa Research Project and the Oriya-versions of two chronicles and one genealogy, which had already been published in 1940 by A.B. Mahanti, it is possible to give a first tentative statement concerning the origin of Puri's Temple Chronicles and their historical development. Most of these texts cover three distinct phases:

a) the mythological "prehistory" of the former ages of the world,
b) the "proto-history" of the former legendary or semi-legendary dynasties of Orissa (e.g. the Keśarī-Dynasty) and

[13] Ibid., p. 2.

[14] See G.N. Dash, Māḍalāpāñjira aitihāsika prāmāṇikatā, in: *Dagara*, 25, 4 (Oct. 1961) 16-19.

c) the historical period with its increasingly reliable facts.[15]

The "historical period" begins with the conquest of central Orissa by Anantavarman Coḍagaṅga in the early 12th century and includes the period of the Gaṅga dynasty (to 1434), of the Sūryavaṃśa Gajapatis and their successors up to the destruction of the cult of Jagannātha in 1568, and concludes with the Khurda dynasty from the end of the 16th century to the conquest of Orissa by the East India Company in 1803.

As regards their literary genre these texts can also be divided into three groups:

a) the *Chronicles* containing - mostly in prose - very brief repre sentations of the respective "history" of the Orissan kings, their years of reign or the - especially in Orissa well-known - aṅka years[16] and in one case even the Śāka years;
b) the *genealogies* containing simple lists of kings' names with their years of reign or aṅka years and - also in one case - Śāka years;
c) other texts, including two related, compendium-like representations of various aspects of the cult of Jagannātha; the temple records, the Mādaḷā Pāñjī proper, in the broadest sense also belong to this category.

A considerable number of these texts formerly belonged to the Deuḷa Karaṇa of Puri. The palm-leaf records pertain to various aspects of the Temple of Jagannāth, its cult, its priests, the temple economy, privileges of distinct visitors and so on. Most of the texts are written in Oriya, one of the Chronicles (of which two manuscripts are known) is in Sanskrit. Furthermore, a great number of Telugu texts is known, which belong - as the Sanskrit Chronicles - to the Mackenzie Collection in Madras.

My account is based on the following texts. In 1940 A.B. Mahanti for the first time published two Oriya chronicles and a genealogy under the title *Mādaḷā Pāñjī. Rājabhoga Itihāsa*. From the introduc-

---

[15] G.N. Dash, Māḍaḷā Pāñji: Rāj Bhog, in: *Orissa Research Project, Second Interim Report 1973*, p. 5 (mimeogr.).

[16] The aṅka-counting of regnal years of the Gajapati kings common in Orissa does not count the 1st, 6th, 16th, 20th, 26th, 30th, 36th etc. year. So the 15th regnal year is the 18th aṅka-year.

tion it is evident that Mahanti used only copies of these texts, which he had got from the Taḍhau Karaṇa and Deuḷa Karaṇa of the Jagannātha Temple and from the palace of the Rājā of Puri[17]. But it is not clear whether this order of the places of origin of the texts corresponds to the order of their publication in Mahanti's book. On the contrary, it is more likely that Mahanti's first chronicle belonged to the Deuḷa Karaṇa, not to the Taḍhau. None of the texts published by Mahanti has a name - at least not in their published version. The title Mahanti used for it may be correct. As I have shown earlier,[18] the "popular" title Mādaḷā Pāñjī refers most likely to the big "drum" *(mādaḷā)*-like bundles of palm leaves of these temple records. But as we know from A. Stirling's earliest history of Orissa,[19] the Temple Chronicles, too, belonged to the corpus of the "Mādaḷā Pāñjī" - in the broadest sense. The name of all the Oriya chronicles may have been indeed "Rājabhoga" or something similar. This is evident from an examination by R.P. Chanda, who succeeded in 1926 for the first time (and as it seems, until today, for the last time) in looking into the originals in Puri himself. According to Chanda they were in possession of the Deuḷa Karaṇa, the Taḍhau Karaṇa and the Rājā of Puri. The texts mentioned with name in his report bear the titles *Rajāmānaṅka rāya bhoga kāla*, *Rajāmānaṅka rāyya-bhoga* and *kaliyuga rajāmānaṅka bhoga kalā*.[20] Considering this fact, the name "Rājabhoga" or "Rājabhoga Itihāsa" which A.B.Mahanti chose in the subtitle of his edition should be applicable. For this reason the three texts edited by him shall in the following account be cited as Rbh I, Rbh II and Rbh III.

---

[17] A.B. Mahanti, *Mādaḷā Pāñcī. Rājabhoga Itihāsa,* Cuttack 1940, reprint Bhubaneswar 1969.

[18] See the preceding article.

[19] A. Sterling mentions as one of his sources a "Raj Charitra or Annals of the Kings", which he calls a "chapter of the *Mandala* (sic) Panji or Records preserved in the temple of Jagannath". A. Sterling, An Account, Geographical, Statistical and Historical of Orissa Proper, or Cuttack, in: *Asiatick Researches,* 15 (1822) 163-388 (236).

[20] R.P. Chanda, Notes on the Madala Panji - (Muhammadan Conquest of Orissa), in: *JBORS,* 13 (1927) 10-27. Chanda, too, does not specify exactly the owners of the different manuscripts.

Of greatest importance for our further analysis, in particular for the question of the possible origin and the early development of historiography in Puri, is another text acquired by G.C. Tripathi along with temple records from the Deuḷa Karaṇa. This text represents an extensive "handbook" compendium of different aspects of the Jagannātha cult. The title of this text is also unknown as the first three palm leaves are missing and the text ends without any colophon. Within the Orissa Research Project the title "Rājabhoga" very soon became established, yet it is only applicable for the "historical" part of the manuscript. Since this text contains a long section of the different Sevās, the name *Sevākarmāṇi* (plural) for the total manuscript is more likely to be correct. The reason of this assumption is that it is very likely that it was this very manuscript which was mentioned in the first British report of the Jagannātha Temple in 1805: "In charge of the Deul Kurn (Deuḷa Karaṇa) or accountant of the temple, there is a Panjee or bundle of leaves called Karmanee Potee in which is written the duties of every description of Shewak (sevaka) or servant of the temple and it is an established rule that they perform these ceremonies and conform to the line of conduct therein laid down".[21] Hence the manuscript acquired by the Orissa Research Project from the Deuḷa Karaṇa in 1970 should be named Sevākarmāṇi, not Rājabhoga, with regard to its differentiation from the three Rājabhoga-Itihāsa-texts published by Mahanti. Therefore the historically relevant parts of this text are accordingly quoted as Sk I, Sk II etc.

The Sevākarmāṇi start with the mythological "history" of earlier Yuga ages and the Indradyumna legend of the earliest Jagannātha Temple in Puri (pp. 1-18). Then a chronicle follows, commencing with a list of 16 Purāṇic kings and the story of a Śaka king, who was defeated by Vikramāditya. After the description of a flood and Jagannātha's hundred year absence in Western Orissa, legendary accounts of the Keśarī kings are given, followed by the history of the first six kings of the Gaṅga-Dynasty up to Anaṅgabhīma (pp. 19-33,= Sk I). There follows an exceedingly detailed

[21] Report of Charles Groeme, Collector, Jagurnath, 10th June 1805, submitted to Thomas Fortescue, Secretary to Commissioner, Cuttack. In: *Jagannath Temple Correspondence,* Vol. VIII, Board of Revenue Cuttack.

description of Anaṅgabhīma's actions, such as the moving of the capital to Vārāṇasī Kaṭaka (=Cuttack), the carrying out of a tax reform, the founding of a Jagannātha Temple in Puri, donations to the temple, the establishment of various temple festivals and the nomination of new groups of priests in Puri (pp. 34-108, = Sk II). This portion could be named as "Anaṅgabhīmacaritam" and as such it is the focus of the whole Sevākarmāṇi. As to our question of the development of the Puri Chronicles, this text is for the time being less important than the next portion. It contains a list of land donations (*deśa-khañjā*) to the Jagannātha Temple from the early Keśarī kings until the fall of the empire in 1568. As these donations are listed in a chronological order, this text, too, represents an important genealogy for us (pp. 109-163, = Sk III). Furthermore, there is a description of the Nabakalebara ritual of the renewal of the wooden figures of the Jagannātha Trinity (pp. 164-188),[22] and a lengthy list of different Sevās (pp.189-290). Then a short representation of the Temple of Konarak, Bhubaneswar and Jaipur (pp. 291-325) follows. These different texts are followed by a most important genealogy of Kaliyuga kings up to the fall of the Orissa kingdom and the Jagannātha cult in 1568 (pp. 325-330, = Sk IV). After a short text with the name *Puruṣottama-kṣetra-dāru-avatāra* (pp. 331-333) the manuscript concludes with a very short but important chronicle of the Khurda/Puri Dynasty from Rāmacandra I at the end of the 16th century to 1715 A.D., the 33rd aṅka year of Divyasiṃha Deva (pp. 333-340 = Sk V).[23]

The other texts which are used for our analysis belong to the Mackenzie Collection. They have been collected by Colonel Colin Mackenzie in the position as Surveyor-General of Madras Presidency and, from 1815 onwards, as Surveyor-General of British India residing in Calcutta (from 1817 onwards). With one exception (see footnote 28) these texts are now in the Government Manuscript Library in Madras. The age of these texts which had either

---

[22] G.C. Tripathi, Navakalevara: The Unique Ceremony of the "Birth" and "Death" of the "Lord of the World", in: *CJ*, pp. 223-264.

[23] Not taken into account here is a text in large parts identical with the Sevākarmāṇi, which is the property of the Mahant of the Gopāḷa Tīrtha Maṭha in Bhubaneswar. The title *Śrī Puruṣottama Kṣetra Śrī Jagannātha Devāṅkara Dāru Mūrti Avatāra* is similar to the mentioned insert in the Sevākarmāṇi (pp. 331-333).

been copied, compiled or translated for the Mackenzie Collection is uncertain as the date of Mackenzie's pandits working in southern Orissa and Puri is not yet fully known.[24] However, it is known that Mackenzie was recuperating in Puri from 25th May to 10th October 1820, one year before his death.[25] From this period there exists a great number of dated engravings of the Mackenzie Collection from Orissa, which are now kept in the India Office Library.[26] This fact allows us to conclude that there was considerable activity by his colleagues in Orissa while Mackenzie stayed in Puri. One of the most important texts for our study from the Mackenzie Collection originates from this time and is dated in the Kaliyuga year 4921 = 1820/21 A.D.. This is the unique Sanskrit version of the Temple Chronicles of Puri, of which only two copies are known. One is the incomplete *Oḍradeśarājavaṃśāvalī* (ODRV) from Madras. It was recently published by K.C. Mishra.[27] The other complete text is known as *Kaṭakarājavaṃśāvalī* (KRV) and belongs to the India Office Library in London having been received there on the 14th of September, 1825. This chronicle recently has been published in collaboration with G.C. Tripathi.[28] From this Sanskrit version of the Temple Chronicles of Puri a free-style Telugu translation exists in the Mackenzie Collection of the Government Manuscript Library in Madras under the title *Genealogy of the Kings of Oḍradeśa* (GKOD).[29]

---

[24] For further details see the preceding chapter.

[25] R.H. Phillimore, *Historical Records of the Survey of India,* Dehra Dun 1950, Vol. III, p. 474 ff. I am thankful for this information to Mr. Brandtner, Kiel.

[26] M. Archer, *British Drawings in the India Office Library,* London 1961, Vol. I, p. 488 ff.

[27] *Oḍradeśarājavaṃśāvalī,* ed. by K.C. Mishra, Bhubaneswar 1983 (Government Oriental Manuscript Library Madras, Local Records, Vol. 60, pp. 303-357).

[28] *Kaṭakarājavaṃśāvalī,* ed. by G.C. Tripathi and H. Kulke; in: *J. of the Ganganatha Jha Kendriya Sanskrit Vidyapeetha,* 40 (1984) 1-120. The Ms is in the India Office Library (Mackenzie Collection, No. II.102).

[29] *Genealogy of the Kings of Oḍradeśa,* Govt. Oriental Manuscript Library Madras (GOML), Local Records (LR), Vol. 60, pp. 245-320.

Of greater importance is the text *Jagannātha Sthalavṛttāntam* (JSV), a Telugu text related to the Sevākarmāṇi. It also represents a - in comparison with the Sk even bigger - handbook compendium of different aspects of the Jagannātha cult. It can be taken for granted that the text of the Sk was known to the compiler of this Telugu text of which only one copy exists in the Mackenzie Collection in Madras.[30] For our study, the genealogy of the kings of Orissa from the Satyayuga to the downfall in the year 1568 (pp. 113-120 = JSV I) and a short chronicle of the Gaṅgas and Sūryavaṃśīs (pp. 120-129 = JSV II) are of special importance. Both texts are related to Sk I and Sk IV, but do not represent pure translations. The JSV ends with a list of land donations to the Temple of Puri (pp. 265-305 = JSV III), which is also related, but in no way identical to the list of the Sevākarmāṇi (Sk III).

Furthermore, the Mackenzie Collection contains a genealogy of Gaṅga and Sūryavaṃśa kings to which a short genealogy of the Rājās of Khurda/Puri up to the late 17th century is added. This is the *Account of the Gaṅgavaṃśa of Oḍra Deśa* (AGVOD),[31] which shows peculiar deviations in comparison with the other genealogies. The same applies to a short Telugu text called *Puruṣottamadeva*,[32] containing a totally distorted chronicle of the kings of Orissa. Presumably it is a free Telugu rendering of a text, which was used by Sterling for his history of Orissa in 1822. Its translation was published posthumously by the Asiatic Society in 1837.[33]

With these texts at our disposal we will now try to outline the "history of historiography" in Puri. Such an attempt has to remain tentative as still other chronicles and genealogies might exist in Puri and Bhubaneswar or Cuttack. For example, so far none of the three texts published by A.B. Mahanti in 1940 can be identified with one of those five manuscripts examined by R.P. Chanda in

---

[30] *Jagannātha Sthalavṛttāntam*, GOML, D. No. 2612 to R. No. 1220.

[31] *Account of the Gaṅgavaṃśa of Oḍradeśa*, GOML, LR, Vol. 47, pp. 9-14.

[32] *Puruṣottamadeva*, GOML, Mackenzie Collection, Serial No.: Vol. 9, fol. 7-10a.

[33] A. Sterling, History of the Rajas of Orissa, from the Reign of Raja Yudhishtira, translated from Vansavali, in: *JASB*, 1837, pp. 756-766.

Puri in 1926.[34] Furthermore, the whereabouts of 137 Oriya texts is unknown. In the beginning of the 19th century they were taken into the Mackenzie Collection and in 1938, two years after the founding of the province of Orissa in 1936, they were transferred to the Orissa Academy in the Ravenshaw College at Cuttack.[35] But by means of those texts now known it will be possible to set up at least some hypotheses concerning the question of origin of historical writing in Puri and its further development.

III

The age and historicity of the Chronicles of Puri are still two of the most controversial questions of Orissan historiography. A. Sterling had based his history of Orissa in the year 1822 only upon the Chronicles, the origin of which he assumed around 1200. But at the end of the century J.F. Fleet demanded in connection with the publication of several inscriptions of the Somavaṃśa dynasty that "everything relating to ancient times which has been written on the unsupported authority of these annals has to be expunged bodily from the pages of history".[36] When A.B. Mahanti published the Chronicles for the first time in 1940, he repeated Sterling's thesis in the introduction of his edition that since around 1200 the Chronicles have been continued more or less regularly. Yet Mahanti, too, did not mention any valid reason for this statement. And recently Govind Chandro Harichandan Jagadeb, the Raja of Tekkali, tried again to prove not only the great age of the Chronicles, but also its alleged almost absolute historical reliability.[37]

Since the beginning of the 20th century, however, a critically differentiating discussion began which for the first time could be called scientific. This new approach is connected with the names M. Chakravarti and R.P. Chanda. Chakravarti showed that certain

---

34 R.P. Chanda, op. cit., p. 11 f.

35 Private information of the State Archives in Madras in June 1971.

36 J.F. Fleet, Records of the Somavaṃśī Kings of Katak, in: *EI*, III (1895/6), 338.

37 G.C. Harichandan Jagadeb, *Utkal Empire under Ganga Kings*, Berhampur 1977.

data of the Mādaḷā Pāñjī concerning land donations to the Jagannātha Temple have distinct conformities with topographical details of the Ā'in-i-Akbarī. As a source for his investigation Chakravarti mentions only the "Mādaḷā Pāñjī" and its "deśakhañjā", a list of land donations.[38] It is quite probable that M. Chakravarti used the above mentioned Sevākarmāṇi (or a related text) and its land list for his studies.[39] Furthermore, R.P. Chanda in 1927 pointed out that in the Chronicles "the foreigners who invaded Orissa in the fifth century A.D. are called Mughals". Therefore he stated that "it may be safely concluded that the sections relating to the pre-Mughal period of these texts were compiled in the Mughal period".[40] It should be added that in the "first Pāñjī" published by Mahanti (Rbh I) Raktabāhu, the leader of the "Mughals", is also called the "Patisa of Dili".[41] In spite of the still existing contrary opinions, R.P. Chanda's suggestion has been widely accepted[42] and will be confirmed in the following explanations.

IV

Assuming that the Chronicles of Puri were indeed written down for the first time around 1600 A.D. - thus accepting the beginning of the Mughal period in 1590/92 as the datum post quem - the question whether or not the history of the pre-Mughal era in the Chronicles can be taken as historical depends largely on the question: Which historical sources were at the disposal of the chroniclers and how were they used by them? The question of the

---

[38] M. Chakravarti, Notes on the Geography of Orissa in the Sixteenth Century, in: *JASB*, N.S. XII (1916), 29-56.

[39] G.N. Dash very soon after the acquisition of the Sevākarmāṇi by the ORP proposed this hypothesis. See also his report, op. cit. (footnote 15), p. 3.

[40] R.P. Chanda, op. cit., p. 13 f.

[41] Rbh. I, p. 4.

[42] See for example K.C. Panigrahi, *History of Orissa*, Cuttack 1981, pp. 122-133: "Authenticity of the Madalapanji, the Temple Chronicle of Puri". For a traditional view see A. Das, Madala Panji, in: *OHRJ*, 14 (1966), part 2, pp. 1-4 and part 3/4 pp. 1-10.

question whether or not the history of the pre-Mughal era in the Chronicles can be taken as historical depends largely on the question: Which historical sources were at the disposal of the chroniclers and how were they used by them? The question of the incorporation of these sources in the Chronicles is very closely connected with a further and - perhaps - the most difficult problem: Why did in Puri around 1600 for the first time a form of historical writing come into being, which had not existed in the surroundings of Puri in the preceding centuries? Let us start with the last question, the possible reasons for the development of a historical writing in Puri around 1600. The destruction in 1568 of the "state deity" Jagannātha - which had been worshipped by the great Caitanya ecstatically as "Ur-Avatāra" (*avatārin*) and as Kṛṣṇa during his long stay in Puri only a few decades before - by the fearsome iconoclast Kālapāhār, and the fall of the formerly mighty kingdom of the Gajapatis and thereafter the attempt of the Afghans to transform Puri into a "bulwark of Islam", all this must have had a disastrously traumatic effect on the people in Orissa at that time. In 1590 Rāmacandra of Khurda succeeded in renewing the Jagannātha cult in Puri with indirect support of the Mughal General Mānsingh. When Rāmacandra was even acknowledged by Akbar as the local successor of the Gajapatis there seemed to have been a strong, common need to heal the forced break of tradition and to link up the present time with the "not-yet-fully-destroyed" old tradition. In many societies the rise of legends and historical writing has been an appropiate method of coming to terms with the past.

In Orissa two more facts might have had a strong influence on this need. Rāmacandra of Khurda, acknowledged by Akbar and Mānsingh against other legitimate contenders for the throne, urgently needed a special legitimation which he could only get (under the prevailing circumstances) from the "hierocratical power",[43] namely the priests of Puri and the Jagannātha Cult. Moreover, after the renewal of the cult, it was no less essential for the priests of Puri to assert their claim to the large landed property of the temple, which otherwise might have passed into the hands

[43] Max Weber, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*. Studienausgabe, Tübingen 1956, 2 vol., p. 874 ff.

about an unbroken tradition.[44] Of course all this was no elaborated programme of a "conspiracy" of the bearer of sacral and political power. At best such reflections develop gradually - if they have ever existed in this form.

V

We may now turn our attention to the decisive question: Which sources had the priests, temple accountants and chroniclers of Puri at their disposal when they began to reconstruct and "reorganize" their own tradition and that of the Rājās of Khurda around 1600? An analysis of the chronicles of Orissa shows that the following sources might have been accessible to the chroniclers of Puri:

a) Sthalapurāṇas or Māhātmyas of Puri, such as the *Puruṣottama-māhātmyam* of the early 14th century and its different versions;[45] but also the Māhātmyas of other kṣetras in Orissa, e.g. the *Ekāmra-purāṇa* of Bhubaneswar of the 14th/15th century[46] and the contemporary *Utkala Khaṇḍam*, a "regional" Māhātmya of Utkal/ Orissa;

b) the *Rājavaṃśānucaritam*-texts of the Purāṇas and the different mythic and legendary genealogies of the Mahābhārata,[47] which have both existed as Oriya translations since the 15th and early 16th century;

c) the long historical Praśastis of the Gaṅga dynasty of Orissa (1112-1436) which in fact were nothing but considerably extensive chronicles of the Gaṅga dynasty;

---

[44] It could have been a further "endangering" of the priests of Puri and the Rājās of Khurda/Puri that after the fall of the central Gajapati dynasty, which had "monopolized" the Jagannātha Cult in their sacral and political capitals (Puri and Cuttack) until 1568, Jagannātha Temples were built in several capitals of rivalling princely states of Orissa.

[45] R. Geib, *Die Indradyumna-Legende. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Jagannātha-Kultes*, Wiesbaden 1975; U. Schneider, *Der Holzgott und die Brahmanen. Interpretationen eines bislang nicht bekannten Puruṣottama Māhātmya*, 2 Vols., Wiesbaden 1984.

[46] *Ekāmra Purāṇa*, ed. by Pandit Maheshvar Mishra Sharma, Cuttack, n.d.

[47] *Śāraḷā Mahābhārata*, ed. by A.B. Mahanti, Cuttack 1965-1970.

d) traditions of priestly families as those of Jīvadeva, who in 1510 A.D. in the *Bhaktibhāgavata* traced back the history of his ancestors as royal priests over several dynasties;
e) finally, we can assume that numerous oral traditions unknown today had existed around 1600, especially dealing with the great rulers of the past (e.g. Coḍagaṅga), with temples (e.g. Konarak) and their gods.

As will be shown, influences of all these different sources can be traced in the Chronicles of Puri. But to show how and under which conditions these sources were integrated into the Chronicles (and partly eliminated again) will be even more interesting than the mere proof of distinct sources. In the ambience of a temple city like Puri, historical writing is a continouus process of the reconstruction of the past.

VI

In the Indian Middle Ages, there was no shortage of historical knowledge in the form of dynastic genealogies, royal biographies or bardic hymns.[48] This knowledge is reflected in the long *praśasti* introductions of the great copper plate inscriptions of all medieval dynasties and in the royal *caritam* biographies, e.g. in the Harṣacaritam in the 7th and the Rāmacaritam and Vikramāṅkadevacaritam in the 12th century. But this eulogistical (*praśasti*) historical writing of great "works" (*caritam*) of individual kings and dynasties differs from genuine history writing not only by its lack of historicity and analytic processing of historical knowledge. A specific characteristic for this *Praśasti-Caritam* literary genre is the dedication of its works only to *one* ruler and/or *one* dynasty. Non-dynastic contemporaries were - at best - mentioned, if they had

---

[48] See particularly R. Thapar, *Ancient Indian Social History: Some Interpretations,* New Delhi 1979 which contains three important articles, i.e. "The Tradition of Historical Writing in Early India" (pp. 268-293), "Origin Myths and the Early Indian Historical Tradition", (pp. 294-325) and "Genealogy as a Source of Social History" (pp. 326-360); see also C. von Fürer-Haimendorf, The Value of Indian Bardic Literature, in: C.H. Philips (ed.), *Historians of India*, London 1961, pp. 87-93; N. Dirks, The Past of a Pāḷaiyakārar: The Ethnohistory of South Indian Little King, in: *Contributions to Indian Sociology (N.S.),* 23 (1989) 59-77 and H. Kulke, Geschichtsschreibung und Geschichtsbild im hinduistischen Mittelalter, in: *Saeculum*, 30 (1979) 100-112.

direct - mostly marital or martial - contacts with this dynasty. Predecessors were normally not mentioned, at best the last member of that dynasty having been defeated by the new one. The earlier "history" in the Praśastis and Caritas usually is limited only to mythical (purāṇic, epic) dynasties. Via those "histories" the ruling dynasty was genealogically connected with legendary heroes and divine beings. A rare exception to this rule of historical writing of the early Middle Ages in India was Kalhaṇa's Rājataraṅgiṇī of A.D. 1148. In it the ruling dynasties of Kashmir and parts of northern India are traced back beyond Aśoka, yet an influence of the Rājataraṅgiṇī and its idea of history on the chroniclers of Puri around the year 1600 cannot be assumed. But the *Rājavaṃśānucaritam* lists of the Purāṇas - as the only "all-Indian" work containing comprehensive dynastic genealogies - became possible examples for the chroniclers of Puri. However, these Purāṇic genealogies end with the beginning of the Gupta rule in the early 4th century A.D. According to our knowledge, in 16th century-Orissa neither contemporary royal biographies (though there had been no lack of great and obviously popular rulers of the Gaṅga dynasty and the Sūryavaṃśa) nor *Rājavaṃśānucaritam*-like texts related to Orissa existed. Thus the question remains where the idea of writing a continuous history in Orissa, going beyond single dynasties, may have come from.

VII

In addition to the known Purāṇic genealogies, there existed a text which possibly was of great importance for the Chronicles of Puri. It is the already mentioned *Bhaktibhāgavata* of 1510, in which Jīvadeva, as a member of an influential priestly family, described the duties of his ancestors in four dynasties in Orissa. These are the Bhojavaṃśa, Keśarīkula, Gaṅgavaṃśa and the Gajapatis (=Sūryavaṃśīs). P. Acharya and D.C. Sircar have already pointed out that the Keśarīkula of Jīvadeva can be equated with the Keśarīs of Puri's Chronicles. D.C. Sircar furthermore suggested identifying the Bhojavaṃśa of Jīvadeva as the historical Bhaumakaras, because the "Bhojas" (like the historical Bhaumas) had been great worshippers of the goddess Virajā (*virajā-pada-padma-*

bhakta).[49] On the basis of this evidence Acharya concluded: "I have therefore come to the conclusion that the Bhaktibhāgavata is the source of the Mādaḷāpāñjī. The compiler has borrowed the list of Purāṇic kings from the Bhāgavata Purāṇa and that of the kings of the historical period from the Bhaktibhāgavata which mentions the Bhojas followed by the Keśarīs and, in order to fill up the gap in the chronology, he brought in names either from the Purāṇas or local traditions".[50] To my knowledge Acharya's interpretation was most advanced in its reflections concerning the sources of Puri's Chronicles and stands closest to the following explanations.

The idea to connect the history of several dynasties with the history of the Jagannātha Temple may have been influenced by Jīvadeva's work and the relationship of his ancestors with four consecutive dynasties of Orissa. But his *Bhaktibhāgavata* cannot, as A. Acharya assumed, be the only source from where Puri's chroniclers took their knowledge concerning the historical dynasties and kings of Orissa. On the one hand the Chronicles of Puri contain much more (and partly quite accurate) information than the *Bhaktibhāgavata*, and on the other we find a lot of mistakes and omissions in Jīvadeva's work, which have not been copied by Puri's chroniclers. For example the fact that in the *Bhaktibhāgavata* the construction of the Jagannātha Temple is neither accredited to the historical builder Coḍagaṅga nor to king Anaṅgabhīma (who is mentioned as the builder in the Chronicles). Furthermore in the *Bhaktibhāgavata* Narasiṃhadeva II and not his grandfather Narasiṃhadeva I is erroneously mentioned as the builder of the Sun Temple of Konarak. On the other hand the *Bhaktibhāgavata* also contains most interesting information, e.g. that Coḍagaṅga had been a tantrist, a fact not known from any earlier source but playing a decisive role in the Chronicles of Puri.[51] As we will see later on, this information of Jīvadeva is presumably

---

[49] D.C. Sircar, The Mādaḷāpāñjī and Jīvadeva's Bhaktibhāgavata, in: *JASB*, 4 (1962) 9-16 (10).

[50] P. Acharya, The Keśarī Dynasty of the Mādaḷāpāñjī, in: *JASB*, 4 (1962) 17-27 (23); pages 23-27 contain the text of the *Bhaktibhāgavata*.

[51] Especially Rbh I, p. 21.

partly responsible for the non-acceptance by Puri's chroniclers of Coḍagaṅga as the builder of their temple.

Another, possibly even the most important source of the early chroniclers of Puri were the exceedingly detailed praśastis of the Gaṅga copperplate inscriptions. In his important essay on the Mādaḷā Pāñjī and the early history of Orissa, D.C. Sircar emphasized a striking linguistic similarity between Puri's Chronicles and the inscriptions of the Gaṅgas in the early 15th century.[52] But as the versions of Puri's Chronicles (edited by A.B. Mahanti) at his disposal already render a strongly distorted genealogy (Sircar: "opposed to epigraphical evidence and absolutely unhistorical"),[53] Sircar regarded a further comparison between the Gaṅga praśastis and the Chronicles of Puri as unnecessary. But a comparison of the Gaṅga praśastis with the genealogies and chronicles of the Sevākarmāṇi turns out to be very informative.

The praśasti-genealogy of the Gaṅga copperplate inscriptions was introduced under Coḍagaṅga and was strictly kept by all his successors with only minor changes.[54] The only new addition were the respective "histories" of the ruling kings followed by the donations, which were the concrete reason for the making of the respective copperplate inscriptions. The praśasti of the Gaṅga inscriptions always begins - after the customary invocation of the gods (here especially Rāma and Viṣṇu) - with the genealogy of the mythical Somavaṃśa of the Purāṇas. Because its history, as these inscriptions explicitely say, had already been praised in the Purāṇas, Kāvyas and the Mahābhārata, it is sufficient to mention only the names of the kings in their correct order.[55] This list of the Gaṅga praśastis contains 24 purāṇic kings, beginning with Candra (moon).

---

[52] D.C. Sircar, The Mādaḷā Pāñjī and the Pre-Sūryavaṃśī History of Orissa, in: *JIH*, 31 (1953) 233-246.

[53] Ibid., p. 245.

[54] The development of the Gaṅgā praśastis is only insufficientely investigated until today. See S.N. Rajaguru, The Kenduli Copperplate Grant of Narasiṃha Deva IV of Saka 1305, in: *OHRJ*, 5 (1956), 1-100 especially pp. 2 ff.

[55] See e.g. N.N. Vasu, Copper-plate Inscription of Nṛsiṃha-deva II of Orissa, dated 1217 Śaka, in: *JASB*, 65 (1896), 229-271 (verse 5 f.).

Śakti, the last king of this list, had a son named Kolāhala (also called Anantavarman) who rose to become the first ruler of the town Gaṅgavādi, the capital of the "Western Gaṅgas" of Mysore. He was followed by several unmentioned kings, until five younger brothers of King Narasiṃha conquered Kaliṅga to establish their rulership there. Kāmārṇava, the leader of the brothers, became the first king of Kaliṅga. This "official" praśasti then continues with the record of the actual history of the "Eastern Gaṅgas" of Kaliṅga from Kāmārṇava onwards.[56] Kāmārṇava was succeeded by the historical kings Vajrahasta III (1037-1070) and Rājarāja (1070-1077), grandfather and father respectively of Anantavarman Coḍagaṅga, who conquered Utkal (Central Orissa) around 1112 and built the temple of Puruṣottama/Jagannātha in Puri (in about 1135). He was followed by 14 further kings up to Bhānudeva IV, the last king of the Gaṅgas (about 1410-1436). In summary, 24 "Purāṇic" kings (and a number of unmentioned rulers of Gaṅgavadī) were succeeded by 18 kings of the "Eastern Gaṅgas". But of these 18 kings only 15 had ruled central Orissa (Coḍagaṅga and his successors) and thus only they were of relevance to Puri and its chroniclers.

VIII

In the earliest versions of the Temple Chronicles of Puri we find exactly these numbers of historical kings and their mythical-legendary ancestors. The hitherto known later version of the Chronicles, such as the Rbh I and II, contain the wrong number of 18 - rather than 15 - kings. Furthermore these later chronicles falsify the succession in respect of *four* historical Gaṅga kings, who alternately had the names Narasiṃhadeva and Bhānudeva. According to the later chronicles at first *six* Narasiṃhadevas and then *six* Bhānudevas ruled successively "en bloc". In contrast to these later chronicles the early genealogy of the Sevākarmāṇi (Sk IV) and the parallel text in the Jagannātha Sthalavṛttāntam (JSV I) correctly count 15 Gaṅga kings in Central Orissa from Coḍagaṅga to Bhānudeva IV. Both early texts even contain a rudimentary knowledge of a correct genealogy of the late Gaṅgas, of *four* Nara-

[56] This important change of the Gaṅga praśasti was canonized under Coḍagaṅga.

siṃhas and the *four* Bhānudevas ruling alternately in succession (that means N. I, Bh. I, N. II, Bh. II etc to Bh. IV). Also in the Sk the names and genealogy of the direct successors to Coḍagaṅga up to Anaṅgabhīma III (the father of Narasiṃhadeva I) are already strongly distorted. For this reason it can be ruled out that the chronicler who compiled the early genealogy of the Sk copied it directly from a copperplate inscription. Nevertheless there is a striking "proximity" in the Sk IV and JSV I (in contrast to the later versions of the Chronicles) to the historical genealogy of the Gaṅgas.

This proximity of the early Chronicles of Puri to the praśasti of the Gaṅga copperplate inscriptions becomes even more obvious if we look at the predecessors of the Gaṅgas. As we saw, the praśasti of the Gaṅgas "lifts" their ancestors - after a brief reference to several unnamed kings - directly into the mythological-legendary sphere of Purāṇic kings and enumerates 24 of them. But between the Gaṅga dynasty and the early legendary kings of Orissa the chroniclers of Puri had to take the dynasty of the Keśarī kings into consideration. This was necessary because Yayāti Keśarī is supposed to be the renewer of the cult and the builder of the first temple of Jagannātha and because Keśarī kings donated land to Jagannātha, as is known from the list of land donations (Sk III and JSV III). Around 1600 several Keśarī kings, who had belonged to the historical Somavaṃśa dynasty,[57] apparently were still known to the compilers of the chronicle. But this knowledge was not sufficient to "reconstruct" the genealogy of this great dynasty. Here the chroniclers were again aided by the Gaṅga praśasti. Just as the Gaṅga praśasti mentions 24 "Purāṇic" predecessors of the Gaṅgas, these earliest genealogies of Puri also name 24 Keśarīs as predecessors of Coḍagaṅga (Sk IV). Four historical Somavaṃśīs were integrated into this list. The remainder probably originates, as P.

---

[57] These were the Somavaṃśī kings Janamejaya Mahābhavagupta, Yayāti Mahāśivagupta (I or II?), Dharmaratha Mahāśivagupta, Indraratha Mahābhavagupta and Nahuṣa. The names of these historical Somavaṃśīs appear in the Chronicles of Puri as Janamejaya Keśarī, Yayāti Keśarī, Dharma Keśarī, Indra or Indraratha Keśarī and Nahuṣa. Concerning the so-called "legendary" Keśarī name of the Somavaṃśa dynasty, one should not forget that at least the last four Somavaṃśīs were historically known as Keśarīs, i.e. Uddyotakeśarī Mahābhavagupta IV, Karṇakeśarī, Vīravarakeśarī and Raṇakeśarī.

Acharya suggested, from Purāṇic lists or even the imagination of the chronicler.

Summarizing the results of our delineations, the following facts support the hypothesis that the genealogies Sk IV and JSV I are the oldest hitherto known genealogies of Puri. Besides giving the correct number of 15 Gaṅga kings who ruled Orissa since Coḍagaṅga they retain at least a rudimentary knowledge of the correct order of the Narasiṃhadevas and the Bhānudevas. Furthermore they appear to have taken the number of 24 kings of the Keśarī dynasty directly from the Gaṅga praśasti.[58]

IX

Several of these "historical" criteria characterizing Sk IV and JSV I were set aside in favour of other principles of historical order during the further development of historical writing in Puri, probably already in the beginning of the 17th century. The list of landed property of the Jagannātha Temple (Sk III) appears to have had - directly or indirectly - a great influence on the further development of the Chronicles of Puri. It begins with a statement summarizing the land donations of the Keśari kings. Then follow the donations, chronologically ordered, from Coḍagaṅga to Mukundadeva, the last king of Orissa before the fall of the empire in 1568. It was probably this list which changed for the first time the correct order of the later Gaṅga kings, as the donations of the four Narasiṃhadevas and the four Bhānudevas were rearranged in blocks, following the wrong order N. I-IV and Bh. I-IV. It is difficult to say whether this new principle of order was merely the result of a "book-keeper mentality" of an ancestor of the present

[58] In my opinion a further reason for an early dating of the Sk IV is the fact that it suddenly ends after the enumeration of the 44 Keśarīs with the hint: "Total number of these Keśarīs 44 rulers; this time of rule (was) 1823 years, nine months, 19 days; this is the complete Somavaṃśa" (*gāe e keśarī 44 pāṭa, e rajākale barṣa 1823/9/19, e somabaṃśa saṃpurṇṇa.*). The source of this obvious interpolation probably is not the Sk I, which also mentions after the enumeration of 44 Keśarīs "*gāe keśarīpāṭa 44 rajā hoi*" (p. 17), but the Rbh I, where also the unintelligible number of 1823 years is mentioned: "*gāe keśarī pa 449 laku bhogakaḷe va 1823/9/19 dina*" (p. 21). The number of 449 Keśarī in the Rbh I instead of 44 is surely a mistake of print or tradition.

Deuḷa Karaṇa. But it is certain that all the later chronicles took over this transposition of the genealogy of the Gaṅgas.

The list of landholdings of the Sk may have influenced the later chronicles - at least indirectly - in other respects. The list mentions only one land donation by Coḍagaṅga and two by Vīragaṅgadeva. On the one hand, this obviously wrong differentiation between two "Gaṅgadevas" may be the reason for the wrong distinction between Coḍagaṅga and his (alleged) successor (which occurs in several chronicles, e.g. "Gaṅgeśvar" in Rbh I). Even more important is the strikingly small number of land donations by Coḍagaṅga. If this information in the Sk III is correct, a plausible explanation could be that Coḍagaṅga only began to build the Jagannātha Temple in his old age,[59] after a reign of more than 60 years, and thus probably concentrated all available means on this project. In addition, land donations to a temple during the initial phase of construction might have been quite unusual. In any case, the difference between the land donations of Coḍagaṅga and that of later kings is enormous, especially if we take into account the long list of more than one hundred villages donated by King Anaṅgabhīma (Sk III, p. 110-120), although this great number of donations by Anaṅgabhīma may be traced back to another possible book-keeping mistake. While the genealogy Sk IV (and also all the other chronicles) differentiate correctly between two kings named Anaṅgabhīma (the historical A. II and A. III), the list of land donations of the Sk refers to only *one* Anaṅgabhīma. Thus the donations of *two* kings of the same name are listed under one king. This list of landholdings compiled by the priests of Puri around 1600 apparently influenced the estimation of the fame and greatness of the kings Coḍagaṅga and Anaṅgabhīma. Who could blame the priests for measuring the greatness of a king and especially his role in the Jagannātha cult by the number of his land donations? Moreover taking into account what Jīvadeva said concerning Coḍagaṅga as a Tantrist, it is quite possible that the chroniclers of Puri concluded that Coḍagaṅga could not have been the builder of their temple, but rather that the builder was

59 H. von Stietencron, The Date of the Jagannātha Temple: Literary Sources Reconsidered, in: *Sidelights on the History and Culture of Orissa*, ed. by M.N. Das, Cuttack 1978.

Anaṅgabhīma (III). Until now the possible reasons for this overrating of Anaṅgabhīma have been seen in his building of a further Jagannātha Temple at Cuttack and his ritual dedication of the empire to Jagannātha,[60] but it is possible that the list of land donations of the Sk also played an important role in the revaluation of Anaṅgabhīma at the expense of Coḍagaṅga.

The regrouping of the four Narasiṃhas and Bhānudevas was just the beginning of a series of further alterations, which led to a gradual change of the genealogies of the Keśarī- and Gaṅga-dynasties. One decisive change happened in the first detailed chronicle of the Sevākarmāṇi. This text no longer mentions only the 24 Keśarīs (analogous to the 24 mythical predecessors of the Gaṅga praśasti), but lists a total of 44 members of this dynasty (Sk I, pp. 19-26). As far as I know, no archetype of this considerable "inflation" from 24 to 44 kings exists. But B.K. Rath shows that in the extended genealogical lists of the Keśarīs five names originate from the Oriya Mahābhārata of Śāraḷā Dās.[61] By this extension of the genealogy of the Keśarīs it may have been intended to extend the "history" of Orissa to the great, legendary all-Indian king Vikramāditya and to connect the earliest "history" of the Jagannātha Cult in Puri with him. After the mythical origin of Jagannātha had been described in the legend of Indradyumna[62] at the beginning of the Sevākarmāṇi, it was now the "*historical*" Vikra-

---

[60] See above the article on Anaṅgabhīma III.

[61] B.K. Rath, *Cultural History of Orissa (A.D. 885-1100)*, Delhi 1983; see especially part 7: "Madala Panji and the Kesari Kings" (pp. 139-152). Rath enumerates the following Keśarīs: Candrakeśarī, Vīra Keśarī, Narakeśarī, Pracaṇḍa Keśarī and Padma Keśarī and then explains: "The first three of these names are stated in (Śaraḷā's) Mahābhārata as three of the five sons of Draupadī. Padma Keśarī has been referred to in connection with the kings who had attended the Svayaṃvara of Draupadī and Uttara. Pracaṇḍa Keśarī is mentioned as an ancestor of the wrestler who fought with Bhīma" (p. 149). In the Sk I which mentions 44 Keśarīs, only two of these Mahābhārata heroes are transformed into Keśarīs (Pracaṇḍa and Padma Keśarī), while in the Rbh I also by omission of three other "Keśarīs" the three sons of Draupadī had been integrated into the list. This is a good example for the steplike "construction" of the genealogies in such chronicles.

[62] R. Geib, op. cit.

māditya who defeated a Yavana king of the Śaka tribe,[63] introduced the Śaka era ("śakābda pāñji", p. 19) and erected the statue of Jagannātha on the Nīlagiri at Puri. After a flood catastrophe in Puri, the statue of Jagannātha was taken to Sonpur in western Orissa, where it stayed during a "kingless" *("arājaka")* time lasting one hundred years. Yayāti Keśarī, the founder of the Keśarī Dynasty, overcame this chaos and reclaimed the statue. After a grand Nabakalebara ritual for the renewal of this statue Yayāti restored the cult in Puri and for this reason was praised as a "Second Indradyumna" *(dvitīya Indradyumna,* p. 24). In spite of the undeniable "merits" of this chronicle in connecting the Jagannātha cult with the all-Indian legendary history it contains distinct mistakes (as for example the connection of Vikramāditya with the Śaka-era and not with the Vikrama era), some of which have been corrected again by the later chroniclers of Puri. But the extension of the number of the Keśarī kings to 44 members of this dynasty was retained by all chroniclers in the 17th and 18th centuries.

The chronicle Sk I might have contributed in another way quite decisively to the final establishment of the "Puri genealogy" of the Gaṅga dynasty. As already mentioned, Sk I ends with Anaṅgabhīma and a detailed description of his great deeds for the cult of Jagannātha. According to this chronicle the number of his predecessors is six, beginning with Coḍagaṅga (here: Kujaṅgadeva). It is stated explicitly: "....altogether (the number of) Gaṅgavaṃśa rulers (is) six" *("gāe gaṅgavaṃśa pāṭa* 6", p. 33). Further Gaṅga kings are not mentioned in this chronicle, for after Anaṅgabhīma's deeds there follows the list of land donations (Sk III), which again begins with the Keśarīs and the early Gaṅgas. This number of six early Gaṅga kings given in the Sk I seems to have directly influenced the extension of the historical number of 15 Gaṅgas to 18 members of this dynasty. As we have already seen, the number of 18 Gaṅgas (with the exception of the early genealogy Sk IV) is firmly established in all later Chronicles of Puri. This number most likely had its origin in the example of the total of 18 historical Gaṅga kings as known from the Gaṅga praśastis. These praśastis mention, in addition to the 15 historical Gaṅga kings ruling central Orissa,

---

[63] D.C. Sircar, *Ancient Malwa and the Vikramāditya Tradition,* Delhi 1962.

the three historical ancestors of Coḍagaṅga from Kaliṅga. As these ancestors of Coḍagaṅga from distant Kaliṅga were, it appears, unimportant to the priests of Puri, the "Puri genealogy" begins only with Coḍagaṅga. In the later chronicles the list of the four historical Narasiṃhadevas and Bhānudevas was extended by two further kings with respectively the same name, thus gaining four "new" kings. The list of land donations (Sk III) had been the model of the genealogical classification as it arranged "en bloc" the four Narasiṃhas and Bhānudevas. Combining this pattern with the hint in the Sk I to "altogether six rulers of the Gaṅgavaṃśa", in the later chronicles (as for example in the Rbh I) the altogether 18 Gaṅgas were divided into three blocks of respectively six Gaṅga, Narsiṃha and Bhānudeva kings, whose years of reign were even added up separately. As in the case of the list of land donations (Sk III), the later chronicles mention only one Anaṅgabhīma instead of two, thus reducing the number of 19 kings (15 + 4 "new" N. and Bh.) to the required number of 18 kings.

X

The gradual extension of the genealogies of the Keśarī and Gaṅga dynasties came to a completion in the fully developed Oriya chronicles. Rbh I, published by A.B. Mahanti, is by far the most important among them. These chronicles reflect the increasing influence of the political development in Orissa under the Khurda dynasty. While the reconstruction of early Orissian history in the earliest genealogy and chronicle of the Sevākarmāṇi (Sk IV and Sk I) appears to have been guided mainly by the interests of Puri's priests and their Jagannātha cult, the later Chronicles of Puri came under strong influence of the Khurda dynasty. This development might have begun when the early history of Orissa, as reconstructed by Puri's priests, had to be continued with Khurda's history after Rāmacandra of Khurda had revived the cult in Puri in 1590. So far it cannot be fully clarified, when the continuation of the Sk I and related earlier chronicles and their connection with Rāmacandra and his successors started. G.N. Dash is of the opinion that the writing of Khurda's contemporary history most likely did not begin under Rāmacandra but under Narasiṃhadeva (1623-

1647).[64] Whenever the continuation of historical writing of Puri during the Khurda period began, it was strongly influenced by the Khurda dynasty and its "need of legitimation". This influence is by no means traceable only in that part of the chronicle dealing with the Jagannātha cult under the Khurda dynasty from the late 16th up to the early 19th century. The depiction of early Orissan history as known from the Sevākarmāṇi has also been revised in several cases in the interest of the Khurda dynasty as shown in the following example.

The most important event of the legendary early history of the Jagannātha cult is its revival by Yayāti Keśarī. As already mentioned, this revival according to Sk I was preceded by the following events: the battle of Vikramāditya against an alien Śaka king, the erection of Jagannātha's statue on the "Blue Hill" of Puri, a flood in Puri and the securing of Jagannātha in western Orissa. After a century without a king, Yayāti brought Jagannātha back to Puri, performed a Nabakalebara festival and was thereafter revered as "Second Indradyumna" for his great act. Against this early representation of the cult revival by Yayāti Keśarī in the Sk I, the Rbh I contains a strikingly different story. In the Sk I Vikramāditya ("Vikramjit") held the important position of the last king of the 16 rulers of the Kaliyuga and renewed the Jagannātha cult. But in the Rbh I he was relegated to number 10. He reigned for 135 years[65] but had no connection with the Jagannātha cult. After three further kings Sobhana Deva (No. 14) followed. He was attacked by Raktabāhu, the "Muguḷa General of the Pātiśā of Dili" (No. 15), and had to escape with the mūrti of Jagannātha to western Orissa. Meanwhile the coastland was struck by a disastrous flood. After 96 years Candrakaradeva (No. 16) succeeded to the throne for 13 years until the "Muguḷa" finally ruled Orissa for 35 years. During these 144 years Jagannātha was kept hidden near

---

[64] For details see G.N. Dash, Mādaḷā Pāñji: Eka Tippaṇī, in: *Dagara*, vol 24, 12 (1961).

[65] In the Sk IV still any allusion to Vikramāditya and a "foreign" invasion is missing. According to Sk I Vikramāditya ruled for 100 years after the killing of Śaka Yavana (p. 18 f.). In the Rbh I Vikramāditya ruled a long time before Raktabāhu. Here the very skillful lengthening of his ruling period to 135 years, which now exactly corresponds to the difference of 135 years between the Vikrama era (57 B.C.) and the Śaka era (78 A.D.), is interesting.

Sonpur until Yayāti Keśarī discovered him, brought him back to Puri and built a temple for him (Rbh I, p. 4 f.).

The Rbh I contains several characteristic deviations from the Sk I which point to a revision of this "history" at the behest of the Khurda dynasty and its founder Rāmacandra I. Thus Vikramāditya is pushed back into the far past and deprived of any function in the Jagannātha cult. Not until his fourth successor, Sobhanadeva, is there an attack by a foreign ruler. However, this is no longer a Yavana of the Śaka tribe but the "Mugaḷa" General Raktabāhu from Dili. K.C. Panigrahi has pointed out already that this Raktabāhu invasion may be a faint reminiscence of an invasion by the Rāṣṭrakūṭas in the early 9th century and that the 144 years lasting absence of Jagannātha corresponds to the nearly identical temporal distance between this Rāṣṭrakūṭa invasion and the conquest of coastal Orissa by Yayāti I and his construction of the first Jagannātha Temple in the middle of the 10th century.[66] Equally important in this context is that several other details in the later versions of the Chronicles seem to have a direct relation to the early Khurda dynasty. Thus on the one hand the legendary history of Yayāti is more closely adjusted to the history of Rāmacandra, and on the other hand specific characteristics of the cult hero Yayāti are transmitted to Rāmacandra. Especially striking in this connection is that 35 years of "Mugaḷa" rule preceded the accession of the throne by Yayāti and that he renewed the cult in Puri not immediately after the accession, but in his 13th aṅka (Rbh I, p. 5 f.). These 35 years of legendary "Mugaḷa rule" correspond nearly exactly to the temporal distance between the destruction of the Gajapati empire in 1568 and the recognition of Rāmacandra of Khurda in 1592 by the Rajput General Mānsingh and the Mughal emperor Akbar.[67] And as in the case of Rāmacandra who was not able to renew the Jagannātha cult of Puri until several

---

[66] K.C. Panigrahi, *Chronology of the Bhauma-Karas and the Somavaṃśīs of Orissa,* Bhopal 1961, p. 26 f. Panigrahi furthermore sees a connection between the king *Śobhana* Deva of the chronicles, who was attacked by *Raktabāhu,* and the Bhaumakara king *Śubhākara* Deva I, who reigned in the beginning of the 9th century, when the *Rāṣṭrakūṭa* king Govinda III attacked Orissa.

[67] *Akbarnāma by Abū'l-Fazl,* translated by H. Beveridge, 3 vol., Calcutta 1921, p. 967 f.

years had passed (11th aṅka) since his accession, the Rbh I reports that in the case of Yayāti, too, several years elapsed until this work took place (in the 13th aṅka). Furthermore, another revealing rewriting of the history took place. In the early representation of the Sk I it is said that Yayāti had celebrated a Nabakalebara ritual and therefore had been praised as the "Second Indradyumna" after the renewal of the cult. In the later version of Rbh I such merits are no longer ascribed to Yayāti, but to Rāmacandra of Khurda. The intention of this rewriting of the legendary history of the Jagannātha cult in the Rbh I is obvious: A chronicle has space only for one "Second Indradyumna"! In the later Chronicles of Puri this position is ascribed to Rāmacandra of Khurda, the celebrated renewer of the cult, who renewed the work of the mythical cult hero Indradyumna.

XI

The process of rewriting the early history of Orissa in the Chronicles of Puri culminated in the Sanskrit chronicle of 1820/21, of which two copies, the *Oḍradeśarājavaṃśāvalī* and the *Kaṭakarāja-vaṃśāvalī* exist. In comparison with the Oriya chronicles two characteristics of the Sanskrit chronicle are particularly striking in regard to the "reconstruction" of the early history of Orissa. These are first a further distinct systemization of the genealogies of Orissa's early dynasties and second the conversion of the chronology of all kings of Orissa from mere aṅka years of reign into the Śaka chronology.

According to the holy number of 18 Gaṅga kings of the Oriya chronicles, the number of the early mythical kings of the Kaliyuga (compared with the 16 kings of the Rbh I) had now also risen to 18 (KRV, p. 1 f.). Of special importance is the fact that the genealogy of the Keśarī kings was aligned to this holy number 18, as their number was reduced from 44 in the Rbh I to 36 in the KRV. Moreover, this number of 36 Keśarī kings in the KRV is explained aethiologically by a legend. Already in the Rbh I (p. 22) it is said that Coḍagaṅga, after having been proclaimed king of Orissa, ate by the order of a Tantric woman 18 bananas from her garden. But the Rbh I does not connect explicitely this number with the members of the Gaṅga dynasty founded by Coḍagaṅga.

Such a direct connection between the number of bananas eaten and the members of a dynasty is established in the KRV in connection with the Keśarī dynasty. It relates that a widowed Brahmin woman worshipped the god Śiva Bhairaṅgeśvara at the Dhauli hill (near Bhubaneswar) and asked him for a son. After a love-affair with Śiva he granted her a boon, and so she asked for a "ruler-son". When Śiva promised her that the dynasty of her son would have as many members as the number of bananas she would be able to eat from her garden, she ate altogether 36 bananas (KRV, p. 5 f.).

After this "correction" of the genealogies of the early dynasties, the following order of rulers and dynasties appeared in the late Sanskrit chronicle:

18 mythical kings
36 Keśarīs
18 Gaṅgas
3 Sūryavaṃśīs
6 successors of the Sūryavaṃśīs until the fall in 1568 and
12 "independent" Khurda kings.

In addition to this are mentioned: 2 kings at the time of the Raktabāhu invasion after the 18 mythical kings, 2 sons of Pratāparudra, the last great Sūryavaṃśī, who were killed after a short time, 2 Khurda kings, whose rulership ended during the British rule of Orissa.

From this results a strange "genealogical rhythm" of doubling or halving the number of members of Orissa's dynasties. In the group of the first three dynasties, the mythical kings, the Keśarīs and the Gaṅgas, we find a relation of 1:2:1, whereas in the following group of the Sūryavamśīs, their successors and the Khurda kings there is a relation of 1:2:4.

The degree of the systemization of Orissa's history by the author of the Sanskrit chronicle becomes clear when one takes into consideration the fact that it was him who wrote the only chronicle in which the common chronological order of aṅka years was replaced by the Śaka era. The Rbh III genealogy did already a lot of preparatory work, because it includes Śaka-dates of all kings from

the 44 Keśarī kings to the beginning of the 19th century.[68] The KRV faithfully adopts all these dates, although as regards the Keśarī dynasty it had partly to invent a new chronology because of the reduction of the number of its members from 44 to 36, in order to keep the total number of years of this dynasty as given in the Rbh III (from ś. 394 to ś. 1054). But at the same time the KRV leads the Śaka era beyond the Keśarīs up to Vikramāṅka (=Vikramāditya). According to the KRV (p. 1 f.) he killed the Śaka king Śālivāhana before his own death in the Kaliyuga year 3179 (=78 A.D.), when the Śaka era began. Because also in the KRV the number of 135 years of reign for Vikramāditya is adopted from the Rbh I, the interval of 135 years between the Vikrama era (57 B.C.) and the Śaka-era (78 A.D.) is skillfully bridged. The beginnings of the legendary history of Orissa is thus, by means of a chronological reconstruction, linked with the the historical all-Indian calendar.

XII

If we now try to draw some conclusions, we get the following picture. One result of the examination was that the Temple Chronicle of Puri written around 1600 had no direct predecessors. Until today no earlier *Vaṃśāvalīs* or *Rājānucaritas* of a single or several dynasties of Orissa are known which could have formed the models for the Chronicles of Puri. Furthermore, no indications exist as yet that Persian chronicles, which in the time of the Mughals played an important role, have to be regarded as a model or even source for Puri's Chronicles. The same is true for other possible foreign influences, as for example from the Buranjis of Assam or contemporary South Indian works,[69] though such

---

[68] The question when the "Śakābdaization" took place in the Chronicles of Puri is not yet sufficiently answered. But it seems to be sure that the Śaka chronology of the history of Orissa had not been used by the early chroniclers of the Sk and also was not used in later chronicles, as e.g. the Rbh I and Rbh II which were continued to the early British time. For this reason it is by no means sure whether the Śaka chronology of the Rbh III is really substantially older than that one of the KRV of the early 19th century.

[69] D.C. Sircar correctly stressed that "the Mādaḷāpāñjī is of exactly the same nature as South Indian temple chronicles like the Maduraittalavaraḷāru and Śrīraṅgaṅkoyiloḷugu", but sees no reason to assume direct influences of these works on the chronicles of Puri. Sircar, op. cit. (footnote 49), p. 9.

influences should not be excluded. But our analysis shows that the view of history and the contents of Puri's Chronicles (especially concerning the representation of the early history) can be largely, if not exclusively, explained and derived from the sources mentioned at the beginning. As regards the mythical-legendary accounts these were especially the genealogies of the classical "all-Indian" epics and Purāṇas and their Oriya versions and temple Māhātmyas from Orissa. Concerning the early historical period, the most important sources were the praśastis of the inscriptions of the Gaṅga dynasty, (most likely) oral traditions dealing with the as yet not forgotten great Sūryavaṃśīs and their successors, comprehensive lists of dynastic land donations, and genealogical traditions of priest families which had been connected with the royal dynasties of Orissa for centuries. Even if it is not possible to trace the sources of all details concerning the contents of the early history of Orissa in the Chronicles of Puri, the explanations above show how closely Puri's Chronicles were connected with these sources.

Our findings concerning the sources of Puri's Chronicles and their inclusion into these Chronicles and their constant rewriting again confirm the already sufficiently known opinion that the Chronicles of Puri can only to a certain extent be considered as works of genuine historical writing with the intention to transmit objective historical knowledge. It is more important to realize that the lack of historicity of Puri's Chronicles is by no means only based on a lack of knowledge of the past, but in many cases a consequence of the Chronicle's social and political function. It became obvious that the Chronicles of Puri developed from a constant process of *reconstruction of the past* with the purpose of safeguarding or even *renewing the present*. Tasks like the securing of the landed property of a temple or the interest of legitimacy of a new dynasty played a decisive role. As similar problems certainly had existed in former times, these facts alone do not explain sufficiently the sudden rise of historical writing in Puri around 1600. What was fundamentally different in Orissa around 1600 in comparison with former times and their problems, was the already mentioned depth of the crisis following the collapse of Hindu kingship and the "national cult" of Orissa in 1568. When after a 18-year *arājaka* Rājā Rāmacandra of Khurda succeeded in founding a local successor dynasty of the former "imperial Gajapatis" and in

renewing the Jagannātha Cult first in Khurda and then even in Puri, there must have been a strong need or even a necessity to renew the "broken continuance" by a reconstruction of the past. This was the situation when a specific form of "dynastic temple chronicle" developed in Puri.

The dynastic history has partly been reconstructed from dynastic praśastis. But the conciousness of a historic continuance and the idea of a comprehensive history of Orissa, combining several successive dynasties, developed from the sacerdotal sphere of Orissa's culture. The idea of a continuous history of Orissa is in fact the projection of the history of the Jagannātha Temple and of those events which took place in connection with the god Jagannātha and his "Great Temple" in Puri. It is their history which the Chronicles trace back via all historical and legendary dynasties to the mythological origins of Orissa's history. The main sources for the construction of such a continuous chronology were the comprehensive and chronological lists of royal land donations to the Jagannātha Temple and the chronicle of a priestly family and their services under four dynasties of Orissa rather than the genealogies of a ruling dynasty. Royal interest in legitimation of political power through historiography apparently was only of secondary importance.

Hence in Orissa it was the hierocratical power of Puri, as personified by the priests, the temple and the landholdings of both rather than the holder of political power, whose vested interests were based on a historical "trans-dynastic" continuity of historiography. The historiographical interest of Hindu dynasties and their court poets was restricted to the foundation and the glory of their own dynasty only. So the history of their predecessors had to give way to the mythical-legendary "prehistory" of the ruling dynasty. Quite different were historical interests and consciousness of the hierocratical power, which disregarded these dynastical borders, if their own ritual and socio-economic interests were involved.[70] The world view of royal praśastis and caritam works therefore may have been

---

[70] The origins of the Pali chronicles of Sri Lanka may have to be seen in similar connections. For a different view see H. Bechert, Zum Ursprung der Geschichtsschreibung im indischen Kulturbereich, in: *Nachrichten der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen*, I. Philolog.-Hist. Kl., (1969) No.2, pp. 35-58.

more of an obstacle to a continuous and comprehensive "trans-dynastic" historical writing than the cyclical view of life operating in world ages which could easily accomodate various dynasties, both contemporary and preceding.[71]

71 In this regard the Purāṇic *rājavaṃśānucarita* genealogies are an excellent example. Embedded in a cyclic world view, they contain the genealogies of dozens of dynasties ruling over more than seven hundred years. (F.E. Pargiter, *The Purāṇa Text of the Dynasties of the Kali Age,* London 1913.)

FUNCTIONAL INTERPRETATION OF A SOUTH INDIAN MĀHĀTMYA.
The Legend of Hiraṇyavarman and the Life of the Cōḷa King Kulottuṅga I[1]

C.C. Berg, Professor of Indonesian and Australasian languages at the University of Leiden, has subjected early Javanese historiography to a thorough critical analysis. Regarding the credibility of certain historical sources he arrived at conclusions which challenge in important points the prevalent notion of early and medieval Indonesian history. The reason for some of the earlier misinterpretations is the fact that in Berg's opinion the "optative character"[2] of innumerable Javanese texts, which he elsewhere terms as "wishful writing",[3] has not yet been adequately taken into consideration in the Indian context.

The faith in the power of the magic of word and script, so deep-rooted particularly in Java, provided to Berg the starting point for his critical assessment of the sources of Javanese history. In this world of magical conceptions of the "old Javanese society, the priest applied his power or the power of the solemnly spoken word in order to steer with it the destiny of his master, the king. He composed a poem in which he depicted how he envisaged the fate of his king. The fate of the king was not directly revealed, but only referred to allegorically by choosing a story from the holy Indian literature which would more or less suit the occasion in which and for which the sacred ceremony was being performed".[4]

---

[1] The article was originally published in German. It was translated by Bernhard Fell, Trivandrum.

[2] C.C. Berg, Javanese Historiography - A Synopsis of its Evolution, in: *Historians of South-East Asia*, ed. by D.G.E. Hall, London 1961, p. 16.

[3] C.C. Berg, Javanische Geschichtsschreibung, in: *Saeculum*, 7 (1956) 172.

[4] ibid., p. 171.

In Berg's opinion, therefore, for the reconstruction of Javanese history it is not enough just to read a text and take the details which appear suitable for the reconstruction. The main question must always be: "Why did the man write his book, and why did he write it thus?"[5] If a historian, while writing Indonesian history, depends only on a literal interpretation of available sources, the inevitable result would be that the picture which he reconstructs from these sources corresponds exactly to the picture of the past "that some ancient priests have wanted us to believe in",[6] for "a priestly doctrine is likely to invert a prevailing picture of the present".[7]

The results of the new interpretation of the Javanese sources by Berg appear, in the meantime, to have been largely accepted by historians of Indonesia.[8] But his *method*, which he himself terms as that of a *"functional interpretation"*,[9] appears to have found less acceptance.

In the following discussion a "functional interpretation" is given of a South Indian legend which is included in the Sanskrit *Cidambaramāhātmya (= Cm)*, the collection of legends on Chidambaram, the most important Śaivite temple town of South India. This may serve to show that Berg's method - even if with a restriction which will be dealt with briefly in the conclusions - may be applied also to certain Indian texts and can contribute decisively to their historical interpretation.

Like Chidambaram, nearly all important places of pilgrimage (*tīrtha*) in India can boast of collections of legends and hymns which are known by the name *māhātmya*. As the name itself

---

[5] C.C. Berg (1961) p. 18.

[6] ibid., p. 17.

[7] C.C. Berg, The Javanese Picture of the Past, in: *An Introduction to Indonesian Historiography,* ed. by Soedjatmoko, Ithaca 1965, p. 91.

[8] See e.g. Coedès' comments on Berg's theories in: G. Coedès, *The Indianized States in Southeast Asia,* Honolulu 1968, p. 344 f, note 145.

[9] C.C. Berg (1961), p. 17.

indicates,[10] a māhātmya depicts a glorification of the greatness and holiness of the place whose name it carries. Occasionally the māhātmyas form collections of different legends of a particular divinity (e.g. the famous Devī Māhātmya) or several places of pilgrimage of a particular region are praised. But the specific peculiarity of a māhātmya is that for the most part in it the deeds of the presiding deity of one holy place are described. This characteristic of the māhātmyas is in keeping with the bhakti cult of venerating a particular emanation or incarnation of Hindu deity at a particular place.[11] With the great number of Hindu gods and in view of the countless holy places in India it is quite obvious that the māhātmya of a place of pilgrimage acquires a decisive role in proclaiming and propagating the holiness of that place. This proclamation takes mostly the form of legends, but occasionally is also made through philosophical speculations on the holiness of a place.[12] The following exposition will point to a further aspect of the māhātmyas which has been largely ignored so far: to the disputes carried on in them between the priests of a temple (*kṣetra*) and the wielders of political power (*kṣatra*).

The Śaivite legends of Chidambaram have their origin in the great epoch of South Indian history under the Pallavas and the Cōḷas (c. 600 to 1250 A.D.). However, the Tamil folk legends of the 7th to the 9th centuries A.D., in which the lifes and deed of the great Śaivite Nāyaṉārs in Chidambaram are glorified, did not

---

[10] Monier-Williams: "magnanimity, majesty, dignity etc."

[11] In variation of Max Müller's famous term *henotheism*, the Soviet Dravidist Pyatigorskiy coined the expression *henolocotheism* for the described phenomenon of the specifically South Indian bhakti religiosity.

[12] An excellent example is provided by the philosophical meaning of Puṇḍarīkapura, "the Lotus City", another name of Chidambaram. In its explanation of this name the *Cm* combines the Upaniṣad teachings of the unity of Ātman and Brahman taking place in the lotus heart of the body and micro-macrocosmic speculations of the magical identity of the human body and the earth. As Chidambaram forms the heart of the earth, the bhakta attains the redeeming union with Śiva in Chidambaram while having a *darśan* of Siva's Ānanda Tāṇḍava in the Citsabhā, the innermost lotus of Chidambaram, the "Lotus City" (= Puṇḍarīkapura, Cm, XV, 18-39). See H. Kulke, *Cidambaramāhātmya. Eine Untersuchung der religionsgeschichtlichen und historischen Hintergründe für die Entstehung der Tradition einer südindischen Tempelstadt*, Wiesbaden 1970, pp. 136-145.

gain entry into the Sanskrit *Cm*. Instead, the *Cm*[13] represents a compendium of new legends of the mythical origin of the temple city of Chidambaram and its famous cosmic ānanda tāṇḍava dance of Śiva. The date of their final compilation appears to be the early 12th century. The ānanda tāṇḍava dance of Śiva and its first performance in Chidambaram is the focal point of these new legends. This cult cannot be traced before the 10th c. A.D. From Chidambaram as the centre of this cult, this new dance form of Śiva spread in South India to such an extent that its sculpture, which Ananda Coomaraswamy has described in his famous essay "The Dance of Siva", is now considered one of the most famous symbols of entire Hinduism.

The *Cm* depicts in 26 adhyāyas, each of about 50 ślokas, the legendary story of Chidambaram. After the introductory chapters (I - V) it begins with the coming of the Ṛṣi Vyāghrapāda to Chidambaram where he worshipped a Liṅga at Śivagaṇgā, the holy lake of Chidambaram (VI - X). Then after a long legend of the mythical sage, there follows the description of the arrival of Śiva in Chidambaram where for the first time the god performs his cosmic dance, the ānanda tāṇḍava (XI - XVIII). Subsequently in the last section of the māhātmya we find a description of the visit of the legendary king Hiraṇyavarman who, in gratitude for his healing of leprosy in the Śivagaṅga, settles 3000 Brahmins in Chidambaram, gets the temples of Chidambaram constructed and then holds the first great temple festival.

While in the first two sections we come across only legendary holy men who elude any historical classification,[14] in Hiraṇyavarman we meet with a figure whose legendary story is full of vague allusions to a historical situation. Most relevant in this regard is the handing over of a tiger banner to Hiraṇyavarman by Vyāghrapāda. As was well-known to all interested contemporaries of the author

---

[13] Government Manuscript Library Madras, Ms. D. 19347 and Ms. R 7632; all quotations from D 19347.

[14] Patañjali, who, besides Vyāghrapāda and Hiraṇyavarman, is one of three great cult heros of Chidambaram, is identified by traditional scholars with the famous grammarian and with the no less well known author of the Yogasūtras, both of whom bear this name. Equating these two is as untenable (E. Frauwallner, *Geschichte der indischen Philosophie*, vol. I, Salzburg 1953, p. 285) as their identification with the Patañjali of *Cm*.

of our legend, the tiger flag represented the royal symbol of the Cōḷas. Due to its clear reflection of historical events, the Hiraṇyavarman legend is particularly well-suited for elucidating certain aspects of the evolution and the transformation of a South Indian temple legend.

The twenty-fifth adhyāya contains a detailed description of the magnificent construction of Chidambaram by King Hiraṇyavarman which in the historical context can only be understood as a renovation. On the basis of his extensive investigations in Chidambaram, Harle had come to the important conclusion: "The vast majority of the older buildings which are still standing in the temple belong, without much doubt, to the time of Kulottunga I (1070 - 1118) and his immediate successors, for whose building activity there is fortunately a good deal of evidence."[15] The oldest inscription of Chidambaram preserved *in situ* likewise derives from Kulottuṅga I.[16] After this inscription there exists an uninterrupted series of inscriptions from Kulottuṅga and his successors. The art historical and epigraphical sources in Chidambaram, therefore, rule out any basic re-shaping of Chidambaram after Kulottuṅga I. Certain particulars about the buildings allegedly erected by Hiraṇyavarman in Chidambaram, like gateway-towers (gopura, XXV, 34) and enclosing fortifications (XXV, 33) of the entire temple lay-out rule out any period before c. 1000 A.D. for art historical reasons, since such constructions came to be included in the temple architecture of South India only since the eleventh century.[17]

If we consider the eleventh century as a likely period of origin of the Hiraṇyavarman legend, then the first half of the eleventh century is straightaway excluded because of the numerous references in the legend to a critical situation in the kingdom of

[15] J.C. Harle, *Temple Gateways of South India. The Architecture and Iconography of the Chidambaram Gopuras*, Oxford 1963, p. 31.

[16] ARE, 119/1888. See also S.R. Balasubrahmanyan, The Oldest Chidambaram Inscriptions, in: *Journal of the Annamalai University*, 12 (1943) 106-118 and 13 (1944) 55-91.

[17] Harle, op.cit., p. 16 f.

Hiraṇyavarman.[18] This period represents the zenith of the power of the Cōḷa empire under Rājarāja I (985-1014) and Rājendra I (1012-1044), a period in which the first monumental imperial temple of the Cōḷas arose and in which the army and the navy of this dynasty advanced to Bengal and even South East Asia. The repeated stress of the māhātmya on politically troubled times applies in the eleventh century only to the year 1070. After the death of the Cōḷa king Virarājendra in the beginning of the year 1070,[19] the Western Cāḷukya ruler Vikramāditya VI succeeded in penetrating with an army deep into the Cōḷa empire and to get his favourite, the Cōḷa prince Adhirājendra, crowned as the new Cōḷa king in the capital Gangaikondacholapuram. But a few weeks later the Eastern Cāḷukya, Rājendra II (later Kulottuṅga I), managed to ascend the Cōḷa throne under circumstances not yet fully understood. The fact that in both cases outside powers intervened is unique in the history of the imperial Cōḷas of the eleventh century. The fight which preceded the crowning of Adhirājandra can scarcely represent the background for the Hiraṇyavarman legend, since Adhirājendra disappeared from the political stage after a few weeks. All the more clearly does the life of Rājendra II/Kolottuṅga I reveal remarkable parallels to the legend of Hiraṇyavarman.

Kulottuṅga belonged to the Eastern Cāḷukya dynasty of Veṅgi whose kingdom lay in the South Indian river basins of the Godavari and Krishna. The Cāḷukyas were hereditary enemies of the Cōḷas, but as a result of political events the Eastern Cāḷukyas entered into close marriage alliances with them. Thus Kulottuṅga I was already more a Cōḷa by blood than a Cāḷukya. After the death of his father in 1061 Kulottuṅga appears to have been the ruler of the Eastern Cāḷukyas as Rājendra II. But about a year later he was expelled from the throne by his uncle Vijayāditya VII. We have little reliable information on his further life till 1070 when he suddenly ascended the Cōḷa throne.

---

[18] E.g. *Cm*, XXIV, 53, where Hiraṇyavarman is called upon by Vyāghrapāda to seize the power: "Your father is overcome by old age. Your kingdom is without leadership. Seize the power!"

[19] K.A. Nilakanta Sastri devotes a full chapter to the early history of Kulottuṅga (K.A. Sastri, *The Cōḷas*, Madras 1955, pp. 285-300).

Some of the reasons will now be set forth for the strange fact that a ruler of a South Indian kingdom may have been admitted even during his lifetime into the ranks of a legendary figure of a famous temple. The Hiraṇyavarman legend begins with a detailed description of ancestral lineage which is traced back to the two sons of the sun, Manu and Yama (XX, 4-37). The sixth descendant of this solar dynasty (*sūryavaṃśa*) is Hiraṇyavarman. His membership of the Sūryavaṃśa is confirmed emphatically in the legend at several places (e.g. XXI, 51). This striking emphasis on Hiraṇyavarman's descent from the sun may have had a clear function with regard to Kulottuṅga I. As a Cāḷukya, he is a scion of the *lunar* dynasty, whereas the Cōḷas are assigned to the *solar* dynasty. In order to free Kulottuṅga from the 'blemish' of his Cāḷukya origin, an ancestry was invented for Hiraṇyavarman/Kulottuṅga, which reaches back to Manu, the son of the sun, in order to legitimize Kulottuṅga's sovereignty over the Cōḷa empire.

As a further important event, the legend describes in detail the adoption of Hiraṇyavarman by Vyāghrapāda, the first priest of Chidambaram (XXII, 20-25). It is interesting to hear what Jayagoṇḍar, the court poet of Kulottuṅga, reports in his major work, the *Kaliṅgattupparaṇi*. There it is mentioned that the ruling Cōḷa king Virarājendra (1063-70) adopted Kulottuṅga as Cāḷukya prince Rājendra II, as his crown prince.[20] But from other sources we know with certainty that there could not have been any adoption of Kulottuṅga as crown prince of the Cōḷa empire. Nilakanta Sastri discusses in detail this claim by Jayagoṇḍar and arrives at the conclusion: "We have to assume that the court poet of Kulottuṅga introduced this story to give validity to Kulottuṅga's title to the Cōḷa throne."[21] These manipulations are supplemented by the inscriptions of Kulottuṅga in which the legitimacy or even the existence of his predecessor Adhirājendra (who definitely ruled a few weeks before him) is called in question.[22] This deliberate

---

[20] Sastri, op.cit., p. 293.

[21] ibid., p. 297.

[22] ibid., p. 294: (To) "cast doubt on the legitimacy of Adhirājendra's rule the poem and the inscriptions are in perfect agreement".

passing over of his predeccessor shows how much Kulottuṅga strove to give the impression that he was the direct and legitimate successor of Virarājendra.

The Hiranyavarman legend might presumably contain another example to legitimize Kulottuṅga's claim to be a direct descendant of the Cōḷa house. The father of Hiraṇyavarman is called Vikrama (XX, 34) and also bears the name *bhāgīrathī-pūraparipanthin* (XX, 35). Bhagirathī is a name of the Gaṅgā. The composite term *bhāgīrathī-pūraparipanthin* might be translated[23] as "one, capable of overcoming (or circumventing) the Gaṅgā river". A meaningful explanation of this term could be an allusion to King Rājendra's campaign upto the Gaṅgā (1022-23), which is the only historical event that links the Cōḷas with the Gaṅgā. The memory of this campaign which deeply impressed South India was immortalized in the name of the new capital of Rājendra I, *Gaṅgaikoṇḍacōḷapuram*, and the great tank Gaṅgātatākam, for the consecration of which Rājendra brought home holy water of the Gaṅgā as "booty". This name of the new capital praised the "Cōḷa, who has conquered the Gaṅgā" and has thus the same meaning as *bhāgīrathī-pūra-paripanthin*, the name of Hiraṅyavarman's father. If we further take into consideration the fact that King Rājendra I is named likewise "Vikrama"[24] in the Tiruvālaṅgādu inscriptions, the name which Hiranyavarman's father has in *Cm* (XX, 34) and that Kulottuṅga I calls himself Rājendra Cōḷadeva,[25] then it seems to be quite likely that it was the intention of the *Cm* to give the impression of an "adoption" of Kulottuṅga by the Cōḷa court under his maternal

---

[23] *Paripanthin* occurs twice more in *Cm*. Once (XIII, 48) Śiva is addressd as *nirghātaparipanthin* which can only be understood in the sense of "one who prevents destruction". Another time the facial complexion of Śiva during his dance is praised which "exceeds the (beauty of a) blooming lovely lotus flower" (*praphulla-ramanīyābja-paripanthimukhacchavim*, XVII, 47).

[24] Sastri, op.cit., p. 206.

[25] ARE, 119/1888.

grandfather Rājendra I.[26] However, this description in the *Cm* might correspond as little to historical facts as the Jayagoṇḍar's report. But both descriptions of this "adoption" reveal the same concern of their authors, viz. to strenghthen Kulottuṅga's claim to the Cōḷa throne by a fictional adoption into the Cōḷa family.

By means of drawing up a genealogy upto Manu in the Hiraṇyavarman legend Kulottuṅga received confirmation of his membership of the solar dynasty of the Cōḷas. The "adoption" was supposed to confer legitimacy on his claim of being a direct descendant of the great Cōḷas. Still more evident is the intention of the author of our legend to sanction Kulottuṅga's sovereignty over the Cōḷa empire in the above mentioned description of how Vyāghrapāda hands over to King Hiraṇyavarman a tiger flag (*vyāghra-dhvaja*, XXV, 16). With this story its author abandons an unwritten law of these legends of only allegorically alluding to political events. Instead, he uses his power to advocate openly the cause of the ruling king by means of a legend created by him. Till now one was inclined to interpret the handing over of the tiger flag to Hiraṇyavarman as a surrender of the priests of Chidambaram to the new power of the Cōḷas after their victory over the Pallavas in the late ninth century A.D.[27] If, however, we see in Hiraṇyavarman the King Kulottuṅga I, then this handing over of the tiger flag must be understood just contrariwise. The priests of Chidambaram sanctioned the rule of a king who had recently assumed power by a *coup d'état*. This interpretation presumes that a struggle for succession preceded his rule. In the entire history of the Cōḷas of the 10th and 11th centuries, this presumption is valid only for the period of Kulottuṅga I who became the successor of the last "pure" Cōḷa, after dynastic and political disorders. Like no other ruler of this dynasty, Kulottuṅga I needed thus an additional legitimation of his kingship.

---

[26] There is likewise a parallel for this in Javagondar's *Kaliṅgattuparaṇi* where it is stated that the wife of Rajendra I had shouted in joy at the sight of the new-born Rājendra II (later Kulottuṅga I) that he would be capable of being a son of the sun dynasty and of protecting it in the future. See S.K. Aiyangar, *Ancient India and South Indian History and Culture*, 1941, vol. II, p. 630.

[27] W. Graefe, Legends as Mile-Stones in the History of Tamil Literature, in: *Prof. P.K. Gode Commemoration Volume*, Poona 1960, p. 14.

The detailed description of the pilgrimage of Hiraṇyavarman from North India to Chidambaram (XX, 50 - XXI, 39) in the course of which he visited numerous tīrthas might be a further attempt to put Kulottuṅga's past in a favourable light. It had already been mentioned in the beginning that as ruler of the Eastern Cāḷukya empire Kulottuṅga had been expelled by his uncle Vijayāditya, whereupon he appears to have led quite an unsteady life till 1070 when he was able to capture the Cōḷa throne. In a later inscription he announced to one of his sons that, while he was still the ruler of Veṅgi, he had embarked on a campaign of world conquest. "Dear child! Earlier I have transferred the reins of power of the Veṅgi empire to the prince Vijayāditya, my paternal uncle, for I was desirous of carrying out a world conquest."[28] In *Kaliṅgattupparaṇi*, Jayagoṇḍar also mentions a world conquest which Kulottuṅga is supposed to have undertaken,[29] but for which there is otherwise no proof. Apparently Hiraṇyavarman's pilgrimage in the *Cm* as well as the Kulottuṅga's "world conquest" in his inscription and in Jayagoṇḍar's eulogy pursue the same aim, that is to lend flattering praise to Kulottuṅga's unsteady and perhaps a little inglorious life between 1062 and 1070[30] and to reinterpret it as "pilgrimage" or "world conquest".[31]

The list of the "politically" conditioned details of our legend can be considerably extended. Two more examples suffice to confirm what has already been said. With an almost stereotyped repetition, Hiraṇyavarman's rightful claim to the paternal throne (*paitṛka siṃhāsana*, XXV, 24) in his own (*svīya*) palace is emphasized in the legend. Such a frequent insistence is scarcely conceivable in the

---

[28] *EI*, VI, p. 339; line 14.

[29] Sastri, op.cit., p. 293.

[30] Kulottuṅga's father Rājarāja Narendra died in 1061. In 1062 Vijayāditya might have taken over the rule of Veṅgi.

[31] According to Berg (1956, p. 174), the story of the twelve years sojourn of the Javanese King Airlangga (1016-1049) with the forest hermits (which usually is taken as an established historical fact) had similarly been created with the intention of "bringing into circulation a theory on the extended stay of the king in the forest before he became the king".

case of a king whose legitimacy would have given no room for doubt to his contemporaries. Similarly conspicious as well as suspicious are the repeated appeals to Hiraṇyavarman to take up his legitimate rule (eg. XXII, 5-6; XXIV, 53). In the case of a king who succeeded his father rightfully to the throne, these frequent admonitions would be difficult to explain.[32] It was different, on the other hand, in the case of Kulottuṅga I whose Cāḷukya origin must have been well known to his contemporaries.

All these references given above concurrently point to an "optative character" (C.C. Berg) in so far as they all lay stress on the legitimate claim of Hiraṇyavarman/Kulottuṅga I to the Cōḷa throne - just because such a claim did *not* exist. No rightful king of the Cōḷas would have needed such a confirmation of his kingship. While investigating such legends and similar sources, our first step should therefore be to identify their "optative character", since otherwise we may depict a picture of the past "that some ancient priests have wanted us to believe in". But if on the other hand we are content with the mere finding that there exists a disparity between reality and wishful thinking, we would prevent a better understanding of these legends. For, their essential function consists in a transformation of a political claim into a new "legendary reality".

We may now ask: Who were these priests who admitted Kulottuṅga I to the circle of their mythological founders and what constituted the reason for them to comply to such extent with the needs of a ruler?

Skilfully interwoven into the legend of Hiraṇyavarman (XXIV, 58-86) is the story of the "3000 Brahmins" whom the king Hiraṇyavarman brought from the Antarvedī country to Chidambaram on the advice of the priest Vyāghrapāda. As is evident from an inscription from the period of origin of our legend,[33] in the South Indian context the term Antarvedī refers not only to the North Indian country between the Ganga and Yamuna, but also to the

---

[32] Here too, as in the note 31, the comparison with the Javanese Airlangga legend suggests itself. In it the king who had (illegally) attained power is said to be urged by the priests to take over the rule of the masterless state (Berg, 1956, p. 172 ff.)

[33] *EI*, IV, p. 36; Sastri (1955) p. 320.

land between the South Indian rivers Godavari and Krishna. It was exactly this area that formed the central tract of Kulottuṅga's hereditary kingdom of Veṅgi. The priests whom Hiraṅyavarman/ Kulottuṅga settled in Chidambaram therefore might have been priests from his own country.

This description of their settlement in Chidambaram may be based on a historical event.[34] For an usurper of the Cōḷa throne the presence of priests owing allegiance to him in the sacred centre of the empire must have been of great significance. In this context it is informative to consider the attitude of Jaṭāvarman Sundara Pāṇḍya (1251-69), the great ruler of the "later" Pāṇḍyas, who finally put an end to the Cōḷa hegemony over South India in the thirteenth century. Jaṭāvarman carried out in Chidambaram deeds similar to those credited to the Cōḷa kings. Thus, for example, he got himself weighed against gold in order to gild the dance hall of Śiva in Chidambaram.[35] Moreover an inscription at Chidambaram[36] reports of Jaṭāvarman's foundation of an agrahāra village for 108 Brahmins near Chidambaram. This settling of 108 Brahmins in the temple city, where previously Cōḷa kings had been crowned, might have had plausible reasons similar to the ones for the alleged settlement of "3000" by Hiraṅyavarman/Kulottuṅga which is reported in the Hiraṅyavarman legend.

We may even look among these priests for the author of our legend. But his task might not have been limited to the legitimation of the rule of the king over the Cōḷa empire. As newcomers, these newly settled priests might have faced problems similar to those of King Kulottuṅga. Therefore the author attests additionally for himself and for the other new priests from South India's Antarvedi country a legendary origin by associating their origin with that of the legendary king Hiraṇyavarman. Moreover, he confirms that Lord Śiva himself was one of them by narrating the

---

34 The settling of the "3000" is not referred to in any inscription. Moreover it is certain that it is *not* traceable in the literature preceding the time of origin of our legend, whereas it becomes an inseparable part of the sanctity of Chidambaram after the 12th century (eg. in Umāpati's *Kuñcitāṅghristava,* c. A.D. 1300).

35 K.A.N. Sastri, *A History of South India*, Madras 1966, p. 215; see also *SII,* No. 260.

36 ARE, 277/1913.

story that on their arrival in Chidambaram one of the "3000" was missing, whereupon, to the surprise of everybody, Śiva's voice announces that he, Śiva, was the missing one (XXIV, 74 ff).

During the lifetime of their royal patron it might have been an advantage to be the favourites of the ruling king in contrast to the other priestly inhabitants. But soon after his death this connection was bound to veer increasingly round to a disadvantage in the face of the old guard. For, through their first priest Vyāghrāpada the old-established priests could trace back their story upto their participation in the mythical primeval event of Chidambaram, the ānanda tāṇḍava of Śiva. In contrast to them the "3000" were marked by the "blemish" of having been settled only very recently in Chidambaram by a king.

A textual analysis of the Cm clearly proves a later attempt on behalf of the "3000" to "stretch back" their legendary history upto the appearence of Śiva in Chidambaram. Through several interpolations it is skilfully "proved" that the alleged "*settling*" of the "3000" by the king had actually been a "*resettlement*". For this purpose Adhyāya XIX was concocted with the description of how Vyāghrapāda in fact once had sent the 3000 munis to the Gaṅgā. There they had to represent the gods who had been unable to accept an invitation as they were observing Śiva's ānanda tāṇḍava in Chidambaram. This story testifies that the "3000", too, belonged to the old establishment of Chidambaram. In further interpolations before and after the description of Śiva's mythical performance of his ānanda tāṇḍava (XVII, 9-89) it is stressed that the "3000" had eagerly been waiting together with Vyāghrapāda for Śiva's appearence (XVII, 4-8) and that they have seen it "very clearly" (XVIII, 1-4). However, from the original text it is clearly evident that only the gods, alone with Vyāghrapāda and Patañjali, had been witnesses of the first dance of Śiva in Chidambaram.

Together with these interpolations, further highly informative changes were made in the text of the legend. In the original text, whenever the king Hiraṇyavarman issues an order to the 3000 priests (eg. XXV, 52 ff.), an additional address of Vyāghrapāda is more or less cleverly "put before" Hiraṇyavarman's order (eg. XXV, 49-51). Thus in the altered text Vyāghrapāda requests the king exactly what the latter then commands the 3000 munis a few lines later. So the impression is created that ultimately everything

takes place only according to the will of Vyāghrapāda, the first priest of Chidambaram.

We can say with considerable certainty that all these changes in the original text of the legend were made about a decade after the death of Kulottuṅga I.[37] The search for the cause of this astonishing haste with which the changes in the legend of Hiraṅyavarman were made leads us back again directly to the functional aspect of this literary *genre* of medieval temple legends.

For enunciating the claims and wishes of the priests of a temple and in refuting the claims of others, māhātmyas obviously played a decisive role. This significance of a māhātmya is even more evident when we consider that formulations which are taken up in the "official" māhātmya of a temple sooner or later become part of the tradition of the temple - provided that these claims are not refuted on the same level by these māhātmyas. Only this fact is capable, in my opinion, of explaining the rapidity with which the legend of the origin of the "3000" was corrected and the thoroughness with which original instructions of king Hiraṇyavarman were subsequently reinterpreted as wishes of the priests.

In the dispute between the *kṣatra* and the *kṣetra*, these temple māhātmyas may have played still another role. The Hiraṇyavarman legend of the *Cm* permits us to identify clearly how closely the connection of the priests of a temple with a king could be when the two sides have bonds of common interest (e.g. the mutual "endorsement" of a legendary origin). But the thorough revision allows us also to surmise how dangerous it can become when this relationship turns into a dependence of the priests on the ruling dynasty. This negative side of a too close relationship appears to have emerged when the king, to whom the priests once had granted considerable influence in the cult of their temple, became

---

[37] In the Indra legend of the *Cm* (VII, 1-47), which likewise belongs to the Hiraṇyavarman stratum of the *Cm*, the great sculpture of Viṣṇu in Chidambaram is described as it is documented since Māṇikkavāšagar (early 9th century A.D.). At the beginning of his reign the fanatical Śaivite Kulottuṅga II (1133-1150) got this sculpture removed by force from Chidambaram. From Kulottuṅga II to the time of the Vijayanagara king Acyutadeva Rāya (1529-1542) who got this sculpture again solemnly consecrated, any inclusion of the Indra legend (in which Viṣṇu - in the form of the sculpture destroyed by Kulottuṅga II - plays a major role) in the *Cm* is not conceivable. The reign of Kulottuṅga II is thus the *datum ante quem* before which the *Cm* in its present form must have been compiled.

a legendary figure and even found acceptance in the māhātmya of a temple. Such a glorification of the deeds of a king later on could become the model or the cause for actions of one of his successors which may not possibly be in the interests of the priests.

In my opinion, the real reason for the systematic revision of the Hiraṇyavarman legend must be seen in this danger. The interpolations may also have arisen from the desire to declare a legendary king as the compliant executor of the wishes of the priests. The surprising haste, however, with which these changes were carried out in the legend may be traced to the priestly intention of preventing a king, who issues orders to the priests of a temple, from becoming a "legendary reality".

It was indicated at the beginning that Berg's method of a "functional interpretation" of Javanese historical texts is transferable to certain Indian conditions only with a restriction. This restriction is based on the differing significance of the magic of word and script in India and Java. In early medieval India, when historical or quasi-historical sources were abundantly available, we cannot trace a faith in the power of magic to the extent to which Berg presumes it in medieval Java. In Java indeed "the task might have devolved on the priests" of "conferring on kingship a sacred foundation".[38] In Java the faith in the efficacy of priestly magic was capable of creating this "foundation". A similarly potent faith in the power of magic words and formulae might also have once existed in India in the first half of the first millennium B.C. in the period of the Brāhmaṇas. Later, in the early Middle Ages, it may still have survived, e.g. in the time-honoured royal sacrifices like the Aśvamedha or in the ritual of the king's consecration. But it was challenged by the plurality of the philosophical and religious systems, particularly by the medieval bhakti cults. These changes were bound to have the result that magic alone could no more be considered a suitable means to establish legitimate political authority. In India priestly writing or inscriptions composed or influenced by priests were able in this sense only to sanction an already existing situation or to help turn wishful thinking into "legendary reality".

---

[38] Berg (1956), p. 173.

This contrast is necessary in order to point to the diverse effects of politically influenced religious texts. Initially, the directly effective magical manipulation may have influenced its historical context considerably because of the common social belief in the power of magic formulae and rituals. Politically influenced legends might have needed a much longer time to reach the medium of popular tradition. However, by slowly penetrating into the world of popular legends and myths, legends may have influenced their specific historical contexts more enduringly than priestly magic formulae.

MAHĀRĀJAS, MAHANTS AND HISTORIANS
Reflections on the Historiography of early Vijayanagara and Sringeri*

I

The early history of Vijayanagara is well known and seems to be firmly established. Good examples are R. Sewell's *A Forgotten Empire,*[1] K.A. Nilakanta Sastri's textbook on the *History of South India*[2] and the relevant chapter in India's monumental national history, *The History and Culture of the Indian People*, edited by R.C. Majumdar.[3] Here we find the widely accepted and often quoted version of the origin of Vijayanagara which may be summarized as follows: Harihara and Bukka and three other brothers were sons of the Saṅgama family. In their youth they served at Warangal in the eastern Deccan, but they had to flee to Kampili when Warangal was conquered by the troops of the future Delhi Sultan Muhammad Tughluq in the year 1323. When Kampili, a stronghold in the neighbourhood of the future Vijayanagara, also fell in 1327, they were taken as prisoners to Delhi where they were converted to Islam. After a few years, during the period of a widespread Hindu uprising in central India and in the lower Deccan, the Sultan of Delhi sent Harihara and Bukka to put down the revolt.

---

* The author gratefully acknowledges the help and advice given by Dr. M.S. Nagaraja Rao, New Delhi, Dr. (Mrs.) V. Filliozat, Paris, and Dr. P.K. Aithal, Heidelberg. However, the author alone is responsible for the facts and opinions stated in this paper.

1 Robert Sewell, *A Forgotten Empire - Vijayanagar,* London 1900, 1st. Indian edition, New Delhi 1962.

2 K.A. Nilakanta Sastri, *A History of South India,* 2nd. ed., Madras 1958.

3 N. Venkataramanayya, The Kingdom of Vijayanagara, in: R.C. Majumdar (ed.), *The Delhi Sultanate*, Bombay 1967 (*The History and Culture of the Indian People*, vol. VI), pp. 271-325.

But, according to Nilakanta Sastri, in the great surge of anti-Islamic movements they soon began

> to kindle in their minds a longing to serve their country and their ancestral religion in the old way. Their meeting with Vidyāraṇya ('Forest of Learning') thus probably furnished them with the best and perhaps only means of following the promptings of their hearts; it needed a spiritual leader of his eminence to receive them back from Islam to Hinduism and to render the act generally acceptable to Hindu society. Thus it happened that the trusted Muslim agents of the sultan of Delhi who were sent to restore his power in the Deccan, turned out to be the founders of one of the greatest Hindu states of history ... After establishing their sway over Kampili at first for the sultan ... the two Saṅgama brothers returned to the Hindu fold, proclaimed their independence and founded a new city ... to which they gave the significant names Vijayanagara ('City of Victory') and Vidyānagara ('City of Learning'), the second name commemorating the role of Vidyāraṇya in these momentous events. Here in the presence of God Virūpāksha, Harihara I celebrated his coronation in proper Hindu style on 18. April 1336.[4]

During the following years Harihara and Bukka expanded their sway over large parts of the weakened Hoysala kingdom which they "overran and annexed" completely after the death of Ballāḷa III, the last great Hoysaḷa king.

> ... in 1346, the entire family of five brothers and their chief relatives and lieutenants could meet at Śringeri, the seat of the Hindu pontiff, to celebrate the conquest of dominions extending from sea to sea by holding a great festival (*vijayotsava*) in the presence of the most eminent spiritual leader of the Hindu community.[5]

The many repetitions of this story in most of the conventional writings on Indian history give the wrong impression that it is generally accepted. But for more than five decades, scholarly circles have fallen apart into two groups with very conflicting ideas about, firstly, the origin of the royal founders of Vijayanagara,

---

[4] K.A. Nilakanta Sastri, *A History of South India*, pp. 229 f.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 231.

Harihara and Bukka; secondly, about their relationship with the disintegrating Hoysaḷa dynasty, and thirdly, about the role allegedly played by the saint Vidyāraṇya in the founding of Vijayanagara. Nearly all details of the above mentioned traditional description of Vijayanagara's foundation have meanwhile been rejected by some historians or, at least, become issues of heated and most controversial discussions, e.g. the 'Telugu' or Warangal origin of the Saṅgama brothers, their capture in Kampili, their conversion to Islam in Delhi and reconversion to Hinduism under the influence of Vidyāraṇya, the foundation of Vijayanagara in the year 1336 and, finally, their struggle against the Hoysaḷa dynasty. The only point of this story which still remains uncontradicted is the great 'victory festival' (*vijayotsava*) held by the five brothers in Sringeri in the year 1346. But, as will be shown later on in this paper, particularly this event raises several hitherto unsettled problems which are of crucial importance for the history of Sringeri and its relations with the early rulers of Vijayanagara.

II

A major problem is the origin of the Saṅgama brothers as it touches the very question of the origin of Vijayanagara. If one follows the above mentioned "Telugu version" and its protagonists,[6] one has to regard Vijayanagara - the kingdom as well as its capital - as a completely new foundation which rose like a phoenix from the ashes of firmer Hindu kingdoms which had been destroyed by serveral Muslim inroads into South India. This great exploit was performed by two outsiders, i.e. Harihara and Bukka. They were reconverted from Islam by the sage Vidyāraṇya and established their new capital under the latter's advice near Hampi and gave it the name Vijayanagara or Vidyānagara. It is evident that the assumption of a Telugu origin of the Saṅgam dynasty and particularly the alleged contemporary conversion of the founder-kings to Islam necessitates the supposition that Vidyāraṇya played a decisive

[6] For instance V.A. Smith: *The Oxford History of India* (3rd. ed., ed. by P. Spear, Oxford 1958), p. 304; K.A. Nilakanta Sastri, *A History of South India*; N. Venkataramanayya, The Kingdom of Vijayanagara, op.cit.; J.D.M. Derrett, *The Hoysaḷas*, Madras 1957, pp. 168 ff.

if not dominant role in the foundation of Vijayanagara, because "it needed a spiritual leader of his eminence to receive them back from Islam into Hinduism and to render the act generally acccep-table to Hindu society".[7] And, furthermore, it is consistent that any theory of Vijayanagara's foundation by outsiders in the year 1336, almost ten years before the death of the last Hoysaḷa king, quite naturally led to the assumption of a military conflict between the new rulers of Vijayanagara and the Hoysaḷa dynasty. According to this theory, these newcomers forcibly expanded their realm at the cost of the Hoysaḷas and finally they even dealt a deathblow to them.

Against this interpretation of Vijayanagara's early history a group of historians, mainly from Karnataka itself, argue in favour of an indigenous origin of Saṅgama and his sons.[8] These scholars emphasize the continuity between the Hoysaḷa dynasty under their last kings Ballāḷa III and Ballāḷa IV and their former feudatory chiefs, Harihara and Bukka, who had already been in their service, defending the northern frontiers. The adherents of this theory strongly deny the foundation of the capital of Vijayanagara in the year 1336 and refer instead to the epigraphical evidence which shows that Vijayanagara existed already since the times of Ballāḷa III under different names, e.g. Hosapaṭṭaṇa (see *infra*, p. 126).

According to this theory Vijayanagara was founded as a new capital only several decades later, after Harihara and his brothers had already firmly established themselves as the new Hindu rulers of the South. Moreover Vidyāraṇya played only an inferior role, if any, during the early years of the struggle of the Saṅgama brothers for dominance over the South. The famous *vijayotsava* at Sringeri, which, no doubt, took place in the year 1346, was thus not a 'festival of victory' over the Hoysaḷas after the death of Ballāḷa

---

[7] K.A. Nilakanta Sastri, *A History of South India*, p. 229.

[8] For instance most of the contributors to the *Vijayanagara Sexcentenary Commemoration Volume* (see note 18). Most important among them are H. Heras (note 11), B.A. Saletore (notes 16 and 20) and S. Krishnaswami Aiyangar (note 19); and: Hindu States in Southern India, A.D. 1000-1565, in: *The Cambridge History of India*, vol. III, *Turks and Afghans*, Cambridge 1928, pp. 491 ff., and more recently V. Filliozat (notes 10 and 26).

IV in the same year.[9] It was instead organized in order to lend the victorious Saṅgama brothers an appropriate solemnity which allowed them to carry on the work of the Hoysaḷas and to defend the Hindus of the South.

This interpretation of the *vijayotsava* is based particularly on the fact that Kikkāyitai, the dowager queen of the late Ballāḷa III, not only participated in this ceremony but also donated land to the sage Bhāratitīrtha of Sringeri in the same way as was done by the five Saṅgama brothers. The supporters of this 'Kannaḍa version' of the origin of Vijayanagara point out that it is preposterous to assume that the widow of the Hoysaḷa king Ballāḷa III was compelled by force to join the Saṅgama brothers at their alleged 'festival of victory' over the Hoysaḷas. But according to the theory of the Telugu origin of the Saṅgama brothers and their warfare against the Hoysaḷas, this rather strange assumption is indeed the only way to explain Kikkāyitai's presence in Sringeri. In addition, the 'Kannaḍa version' is supported by the fact that a year after this *vijayotsava* at Sringeri, Kikkāyitai is mentioned again in a donative inscription. This time, her name is even placed before that of king Harihara I "which implies that she was not Harihara's subordinate but on the contrary, Harihara had a great respect for the vanishing royal family".[10]

Another major point of the controversy is a number of important inscriptions whose authenticity was contested by H. Heras more than sixty years ago. The two lectures which he delivered at the University of Mysore in 1928 and which were published in the following year under the title *Beginnings of Vijayanagara History*[11] were indeed the most important event in the modern historiography of Vijayanagara after the publication of Sewell's *A Forgotten Empire* in the year 1900. In these lectures, Heras not only evolved for the first time an elaborate theory of an indigenous (Kannada) origin

9 As, for instance, N. Venkataramanayya, op.cit., p. 275, assumes.

10 V. Filliozat, Relatives and Officers of Ballāḷa III and IV who Accepted Service under the Kings of Vijayanagara, in: *Itihas. Journal of the Andhra Pradesh Archives*, 1, 2 (1974), p. 28. The inscription referred to is no. 25 of V. Filliozat, op.cit. (note 26).

11 H. Heras, *Beginnings of Vijayanagara History*, Bombay 1929.

of the Saṅgama dynasty and their "loyalty to the Hoysaḷa Emperors", he also came forward with strong arguments against the genuineness of all those inscriptions which speak of an early foundation of Vijayanagara in the year 1336 and which praise Vidyāraṇya as the "guiding star of its royal founders". Heras concluded that all inscriptions which mention the name of Vidyānagara instead of Vijayanagara were fabricated at Sringeri in the 16th century, particularly under its *mahant* and *jagadguru* Rāmacandra Bhārati (1508-1560).[12] This happened because during this time the two most powerful rulers of Vijayanagara, i.e. Kṛṣṇadeva Rāya and Acyutadeva Rāya, became strong-minded Vaiṣṇavas and shifted their royal patronage from the Śaiva *maṭha* of Sringeri to the Vaiṣṇa god Śri Veṅkateśvara at Tirupati. In order to counteract this severe setback, Sringeri began to rewrite Vijayanagara's early history, proving Vidyāraṇya's pivotal role in the foundation of 'Vidyānagara'.

It is quite understandable that the "shocking finding of Father Heras [was] a rude shock that practically uprooted the belief" that Vidyāraṇya was responsible for the establishment of Vijayanagara.[13] This shock still seems to have persisted in the year 1961 when it caused the exclamation of a concerned reader: "Has there been no ascetic or research scholar till now, for the last thirty years to crucify this false, disgusting statement of this 'padre'!"[14] But it is astonishing to observe that although H. Heras is rarely quoted in this connection, his theory about the forgery of all those inscriptions which refer to the foundation of Vijayanagara in the year 1336 seems to have been widely accepted by historians and epigraphists, particularly, of course, by the supporters of the 'Kannaḍa version' of the origin of the Saṅgama dynasty. The *Annual Report of the Mysore Archaeological Department for the year 1934* mentions among the 'contemporary' inscriptions of the 14th century, which refer to Vidyāraṇya, four copper plates which "are

[12] Ibid., p. 34.

[13] T.N. Mallappa, *Kriyasakti Vidyaranya,* Bangalore 1974, p. 1.

[14] Mallappa even states that he "was drawn to investigate this matter by this exclamation", op. cit., p. 1.

generally believed to be spurious".[15] Among them are those two inscriptions which date the foundation of 'Vidyānagara' in the year 1336 A.D. In 1934, too, B.A. Saletore's Ph.D. thesis on the *Social and Political Life in the Vijayanagara Empire* was published. It contains a detailed survey of the epigraphical evidence which verifies and substantiates the hitherto rather hypothetical findings of H. Heras.[16] But even scholars who are above suspicion of belonging to the quarrelling parties seem to accept the theory that all those inscriptions which mention the foundation of Vijayanagara in the year 1336 are spurious. P.V. Kane, for instance, criticizes in his *History of the Dharmaśāstra* the "grand generalization" of Father Heras but, at the same time, he states that "the earliest inscription [of the kings of Vijayanagara] is that of Harihara I dated *śake* 1262 (1339-40 A.D.) wherein Harihara is said to be a Mahāmaṇḍaleśvara".[17] Kane thus tacitly agrees with Heras' and Saletore's evaluation of the crucial inscriptions of the year 1336.

In the year 1936, the Karnatak Historical Research Society published the *Vijayanagara Sexcentenary Commemoration Volume.*[18] One would expect this programmatic volume to contain articles proving that the foundation of Vijayanagara took place in the year 1336. But, strangely enough, even in the introductory article by S. Krishnaswami we only read that "tradition ascribes the foundation to the date A.D. 1336 although as yet we have no definite evidence

---

15 *Annual Report of the Mysore Archaeological Department for the Year 1934*, Bangalore 1936, p. 142 (quoted as *ARMAD* together with the years mentioned in the titles. The year of publication usually differs about 2 to 3 years).

16 B.A. Saletore, *Social and Political Life in the Vijayanagara Empire*, Madras 1934, vol. I, pp. 83-112.

17 P.V. Kane, *History of Dharmaśāstra*, Poona 1975, vol. I, pt. 2, p. 789.

18 D.P. Karmarkar and S. Krishnaswami Aiyangar (eds.), *Vijayanagara Sexcentenary Commemoration Volume*, Dharwar 1936.

that the fort was either founded or completed in that year."[19] And B.A. Saletore, for obvious reasons, avoids to refute directly the celebrated date 1336. Yet he speaks of 1347 as the "year after the foundation of the Kingdom of Vijayanagara".[20] Moreover, Saletore elaborates in detail his theory of the 'Kannaḍa' origin of the Saṅgama dynasty. And he concludes that "if in spite of all this evidence one believes in the story of Vidyāraṇya Śrīpāda having helped Harihara Rāya I to build the capital, one merely exchanges fact for fiction".[21] A 'sexcentenary volume' published in the year 1936 which tacitly rejects the year 1336 as the date of Vijayanagara's foundation, certainly has to be regarded as a strange paradox. But this paradox seems to be the consequence of the attempt by the Karnatak Historical Research Society to stick to the early traditional date and, at the same time, to argue in favour of the 'indigenous' origin of the Saṅgama dynasty. This, however, is impossible. As has already been pointed out, the theory of the Kannaḍa origin of the Saṅgama brothers and their loyalty to the Hoysaḷas admits the foundation of the new Vijayanagara empire only after the final downfall of the Hoysaḷas in 1346.

Yet this is not the only paradox in modern Vijayanagara historiography. In 1946, exactly 600 years after Vijayanagara was founded - according to the Kannaḍa version - K.A. Nilakanta Sastri and N. Venkataramanayya published their monumental work

---

[19] S. Krishnaswami Aiyangar, The Character and Signification of the Empire of Vijayanagara in Indian History, in: Karmarkar, D.P. and S. Krishnaswami Aiyangar, *Vijayanagara Sexcentenary Commemoration Volume*, pp. 1-28. Already in a lecture held at the Mythic Society in 1920, S. Krishnaswami Aiyangar pointed out that the future Vijayanagara was founded by Ballāḷa III under the names of Hosapaṭṭaṇa and Virūpākṣappaṭṭana. Furthermore, he rejected the traditional date 1336 A.D. as the foundation year of Vijayanagara, but he pointed out that it must have been founded "before A.D. 1344". Published in: S. Krishnaswami Aiyangar, *Ancient India and South Indian History and Culture,* Poona 1941, vol. II, pp. 1-34.

[20] B.A. Saletore, Theories Concerning the Origin of Vijayanagar, in: *Vijayanagara Sexcentenary Commemoration Volume*, pp. 139-159.

[21] Ibid., p. 152.

Further Sources of Vijayanagara History.[22] This work contains a number of traditional accounts which date the foundation of Vijayanagara in the year 1336. But none of these texts is of an early origin. The most famous collection of these accounts, the *Vidyāraṇya kālajñāna* which tradition ascribes (as "prophecies", i.e. *kālajñāna*) to Vidyāraṇya, is certainly not older than ca. 1580 A.D.[23] It is most significant that the description of the origin of Vijayanagara given by these late accounts, resemble the story which we know from the spurious and most probably contemporary inscriptions and the narration of Nunes, the Portuguese trader of the mid-16th century.

It is difficult to understand why such great scholars like K.A. Nilakanta Sastri and N. Venkataramanayya wrote during the following years their histories of the early Vijayanagara period mainly on the basis of these late accounts and dubious inscriptions of the year 1336. The latter did not even hesitate to write about his 'opponents' and their Kannaḍa version: "Though espoused with enthusiasm by some eminent South Indian epigraphists and historians, this view seems to be based not on facts but on gratuitous assumptions and false identifications which need not to be discussed here." And, significantly enough, N. Venkataramanayya explicitly states that the early history of Vijayanagara which he wrote in the *History and Culture of the Indian People* is based on these late accounts as known from the *Vidyāraṇya kālajñāna* and *Vidyāraṇya-Vṛttānta*.[24]

III

In view of the fact that, firstly, these accounts which were composed mainly after the downfall of imperial Vijayanagar in 1565 still form the major basis of many modern historical writings

---

[22] K.A. Nilakanta Sastri and N. Venkataramanayya, *Further Sources of Vijayanagara History*, Madras: Madras University, 1946 (Madras University Historical Series, vol. 18). In 1919, S. Krishnaswami Aiyangar had already published his *Sources of Vijayanagara History* as vol. 1 of the Madras University Historical Series.

[23] *ARMAD, 1932*, p. 101.

[24] N. Venkataramanayya, The Kingdom of Vijayanagara, p. 321.

on early Vijayanagara and, secondly, that this version still has to be regarded, at least outside Karnataka, as the 'standard version' of the history of early Vijayanagara,[25] Vasundhara Filliozat's more recent epigraphical studies are of greatest importance. Thanks to her Ph.D. thesis *L'épigraphie de Vijayanagar du début à 1377*,[26] we now possess a complete corpus of the inscriptions which refer to the rule of the first generation of Saṅgama rulers, excluding, however, the inscriptions which have been defined as spurious since H. Heras. On the basis of this epigraphical material, she raises again the whole spectrum of problems in her comprehensive introduction. She rejects again all attempts to trace the origin of the Saṅgama dynasty in Warangal and shows very convincingly that the brothers began their careers under the Hoysaḷa king Ballāḷa III.

This fact is particularly verified by the early titles of the Saṅgama brothers. Initially, they all held the typical title of 'Great Tributary Lord' (*mahāmaṇḍaleśvara*). Whereas this title seems to have remained the only title of Harihara I throughout his lifetime,[27] his brother Bukka acquired in the year 1349 (Filliozat, inscription n. 28) and again in 1358 (n. 50) the additional title of a *mahārāja*. But it was only in the year 1368[28] that Bukka bore, for the first time, in an inscription of his minister Mādhava, the new imperial title of *mahārājādhirāja parameśvara* ('the Chief King of

---

[25] Even in Karnataka, the traditional date 1336 is sometimes still accepted. A.K. Shastry in his recent publication, *A History of Śriṅgēri*, Dharwad: Karnatak University, 1982, states: "it is proved now beyond any doubt that Harihara and his brothers established the Vijayanagara Empire in A.D. 1336 with the help of Śrī Vidyāraṇya." (p. 21). A.K. Shastry argues mainly on the basis of the literary accounts of Sringeri (see below, note 52). See also the most recent comprehensive publication by M.H. Rama Sharma, *The History of the Vijayanagara Empire*, ed. by M.H. Gopal, Bombay 1978 and 1980. Sharma accepts the whole traditional story about the origins of Vijayanagara and its founders, except for the indigenous Kuruba origin of Saṅgama (vol. I, p. 18).

[26] V. Filliozat, *L'épigraphie de Vijayanagar du début à 1377*, Paris 1973 (Publications de l'Ecole Française d'Extrême Orient, vol. 91). In order to avoid lengthly references, the inscriptions edited by V. Filliozat, are referred to by the serial numbers of her edition.

[27] There may be one exception. But it is unclear whether the short inscription no. 32 which mentions "*Hariha ... rāya mahārāya ...*" refers to Harihara I, ibid., p. 22.

[28] No. 104. For its date (3-11-1368 or 22/23-10-1369) Filliozat, p. 98, note 1.

the Great Kings, the Most Excellent Lord') (n. 104).[29] Though this title is repeated in another inscription of the minister Mādhava in the year 1369, nearly all further inscriptions till his death refer to Bukka again under his tributary title. The only exceptions are two inscriptions of the year 1376 (nos. 130 and 139) which praised Bukka shortly before his death by his imperial titles. These imperial titles were finally acquired by Harihara II, Bukka's son and successor.

From the epigraphical evidence it appears to be clear that the first generation of the Saṅgama rulers obviously hesitated to bear imperial titles, a fact which can only be explained by their loyalty to their former sovereigns of the Hoysala dynasty. This conclusion derived from the epigraphical evidence of these titles is further confirmed by the fact that the early rulers of Vijayanagara sometimes even associated their own rule with the glory of the former Hoysaḷa dynasty. In the year 1354, for instance, it is mentioned in an inscription (n. 36) that Bukka "ruled from his capital Hosapaṭṭaṇa over the kingdom which belongs to the dynasty of the Hoysaḷas".[30]

Another title may be of the greatest significance for the problem of an alleged conversion of the princely brothers to Islam. In the year 1347[31] Marappa and, from the year 1354 onwards, also his brothers Bukka and Harihara (nos. 35 and 36) were praised as "Sultans of the Hindurājas" (*hindurājasuratāla* or *-suratrana*). The meaning of this unusual title is not clear. But it is quite likely that the early kings of Vijayanagara laid claim to a status among the Hindu Rājas equal to that of the Sultans among the Muslim rulers. The examples might have been the Sultans of Madurai (since 1334) and the Bahmanīs (since 1347) rather than the distant Sultans of Delhi. If this interpretation is correct, it is inconceivable, at least for this author, that Harihara and Bukka would have thought it

---

[29] See also V. Filliozat's introductory chapter on "Les titres", ibid., p. XVI-XVIII.

[30] See also inscriptions nos. 84 and 87, ibid.

[31] Hejje (Heddase) inscription of Mārappa of the year 1347, line 39; *ARMAD, 1929*, no. 90, pp. 159-173. V. Filliozat doubts about the authenticity of this inscription (see p. XV of her introcution) and therefore includes only a *résumé* of this inscription (no. 146) in her work.

advisable or even dared to acquire the title in a Hindu context if they had once really been converted to Islam. In this case, they would have certainly preferred to pass over this inglorious event in silence. If this inference is correct, it would be another, if not the strongest, argument against the story of their conversion to Islam. This conversion is one of the main props for the assumption "that they were sent to the province of Kampili to take over the administration from Malik Muhammad and to deal with the revolt of the Hindu subjects [of the Sultan of Delhi]."[32] If this prop is removed, the assumption of the 'foreign origin' of the Saṅgama dynasty must be questioned as a whole.

Vasundhara Filliozat furthermore devotes a whole chapter of her introduction to the names and the early history of the city of Vijayanagara. As mentioned above, the supporters of the Telugu origin of the Saṅgama dynasty ascribe its foundation to Harihara I and Vidyāraṇya in the year 1336, whereas Saletore assigned the merit to Bukka I and dated this event in the year 1368.[33] Vasundhara Filliozat shows that under Ballāḷa III and Ballāḷa IV a Hoysaḷa capital already existed within the vast area of the future city of Vijayanagara. This capital was known as Virūpākṣapaṭṭaṇa, Hosapaṭṭana, or Vijayavirūpākṣapura.[34] It continued to exist under similar names till the death of Harihara I in the year 1357. In the same year, the name Vijayanagara appeared for the first time in an inscription of Bukka I (n. 49). It is possible that Bukka began the construction of a new capital soon after he had succeeded his brother Harihara I. Moreover it is quite likely that this new capital is identical with the area to the South of the Virūpākṣa temple which has been identified as the 'Royal Centre' by G. Michell and J. Fritz. At the latest Bukka had been ruling in this new capital since 1368 when an inscription of his minister Mādhava praises Bukka sitting on the "great jewel lion throne in the new

---

[32] K.A. Nilakanta Sastri, *A History of South India*, p. 228.

[33] B.A. Saletore, *Social and Political Life in the Vijayanagara Empire*, p. 105.

[34] The Virūpākṣa temple is known to have existed at the latest since the early 13th century (V. Filliozat, *L'épigraphie de Vijayanagar*, p. XXVI).

City of Victory" (*abhinava-vijayanagara-mahā-ratnasiṃhāsana*) (n. 104).[35]

It is significant that this inscription for the first time also mentions Bukka's full imperial title *mahārājādhirāja parameśvara*. The fact that the name *New* Vijayanagara and the new imperial titles are referred to simultaneously for the first time in this inscription, certainly has to be regarded as an important evidence for the development of the statehood of Vijayanagara. But whether this evidence is sufficient to infer that the empire was also founded only in 1368 is quite doubtful. It is more likely that the emergence of Vijayanagara's statehood was a gradual and protracted process. Yet there can be no doubt that the 'festival of victory' in the year 1346 and the existence of a new capital and new imperial titles in the year 1368 formed, according to our present knowledge, major steps towards this development.

This interpretation of the early history of Vijayanagara does not imply that the transition from the Hoysaḷa dynasty to the Saṅgama dynasty of Vijayanagara took place in complete harmony. There might have been rivalries between officers of the old and new dynasties. And these rivalries, in some cases, might even have led to skirmishes when the new assignments began to have their impact on the local level. But the crucial question is whether there was really anything like a war between the two dynasties. Be it as it may, Venkataramanayya's conclusion that "the conquest of the Hoysala kingdom was the most notable military achievement in the reign of Harihara I"[36] is contradicted by contemporary epigraphical evidence. This assumption is based only on later literary sources. As an example one may quote from the *Vidyāraṇya kālajñāna* of the late 16th century. According to this text, Vidyāraṇya is reported to have said that Harihara I and Bukka "came to me, related their history and prayed to me. I instructed them to fight again and they did so and this time they succeeded in defeating

---

[35] Compare the Belugula inscription of Harihara II of the year 1384, who claims to have seated on the "lion throne of Vijayanagari" [sic], *vijayanagariya siṃhāsana*), *ARMAD, 1933*, no. 23, line 37, pp. 132 ff.

[36] N. Venkataramanayya, The Kingdom of Vijayanagara, p. 275.

king Ballāḷa and occupying his kingdom and rules in the city of Hastikōṇa (Aneyagondi)".[37]

It is difficult to find an explanation for this obviously later invention by the 'historians' of Sringeri. But one reason may be just a confusion between the alleged achievments of the two kings Harihara II and Harihara I. The idea of a conquest of the Hoysaḷa kingdom by the Saṅgama dynasty became part of the ideology of these new Hindu rulers only during the reign of Harihara II (1377-1404). In an inscription of the year 1384 king Harihara II claims to have conquered Karṇātaka, Kuntaḷa, Konkaṇa, Hoysaḷa, Āndhra, Cōḷa, and Pāṇdya.[38] Harihara II furthermore deliberately concealed the name of Harihara I in the list of his predecessors. In the same inscription of the year 1384, for instance, he mentions as his predecessors only his grandfather Saṅgama and his father Bukka I. Harihara I, his own uncle and Bukka's brother, is passed over in silence. The idea of a military conquest of the Hoysaḷa kingdom by Harihara I might therefore have been derived from inscriptions of Harihara II which were in the possession of Sringeri when the *Vīdyāranāa Kālajñāna* and other texts were compiled after the downfall of imperial Vijayanagara.

IV

So far, we have dealt mainly with the first two points which were raised at the beginning, i.e. the origin of the Saṅgama dynasty and its relationship with the Hoysaḷa dynasty. After rejecting the traditional stories about the Telugu origin of the Saṅgama brothers, their temporary conversion to Islam, the foundation of Vijayanagara in the year 1336 under the influence of Vidyāraṇya and, finally, the military conquest of the Hoysaḷa kingdom by the Saṅgamas, we must now turn our attention to the third problem, the Mādhava-Vidyāraṇya problem.

---

[37] *ARMAD, 1932*, p. 107.

[38] Belugula inscription (see note 35), line 26. As another example, one may quote the *agrahāra* Vidyāraṇyapura which Harihara II established near Sringeri after Vidyāraṇya's death in the year 1386 (Vidyāraṇya copper plate inscription of the year 1386, *ARMAD, 1933*, pp. 138-146). Later tradition, however, ascribes this foundation to king Harihara I (ibid., p. 145).

In his monumental work on the *History of the Dharmaśāstra* P.V. Kane summarizes:

> Mādvācārya is the brightest star in the galaxy of dākṣiṇātya authors on dharmaśāstra. His fame stands only second to that of the great Śaṅkarācārya. He had a most versatile genius and either himself wrote or inspired his brother Sāyaṇa and others to write voluminous works on almost all branches of Sanskrit literature. As an erudite scholar, as a far-sighted statesman, as a bulwark of the Vijayanagara kingdom in the first days of its foundation, as a saṃnyāsin given to peaceful contemplation and renunciation in old age, he led such a varied and useful life that even to this day his is a name to conjure with.[39]

In the context of this paper we are not concerned with his undisputed greatness as one of the most prolific orthodox intellectuals and writers of his age. Our discussion will focus only on the important role which he allegedly played in the foundation of the Vijayanagara empire.

The assumption of Vidyāraṇya's greatness as a "far-sighted statesman and a bulwark of the Vijayanagara empire" is based on several assumptions:

1. King Harihara and Bukka acted under the instruction of Vidyāraṇya when they founded Vijayanagara in the year 1336 A.D.
2. During the following decades he acted as a minister or even chief minister of the early rulers of Vijayanagara. During this early period of his life he was known as Mādhava or Mādhavācārya.
3. Throughout the greater part of his life he was also the *jagadguru* ('guru of the world') or 'pontiff' of the most influential *maṭha* at Sringeri, which, according to tradition, had been founded more than five hundred years ago by the Śaṅkarācārya. As a *saṃnyāsin* and *jagdguru* of Sringeri, Mādhava was known as Vidyāraṇya.

In case these statements are correct and, furthermore, if we take into consideration his tremendous influence as philosopher and

---

[39] P.V. Kane, *History of Dharmaśāstra*, p. 779.

writer, it needs no further proof to call Mādhava-Vidyāraṇya the "guiding star" of early Vijayanagara and its rulers. But, as will be shown, none of these statements can be regarded as historically established facts.

We have already seen that the assumption of Vidyāraṇya's active role in the foundation of Vijayanagara in the year 1336 is solely based on spurious inscriptions and literary works of a later age. But despite the rejection of these major props of all the theories about Vidyāraṇya's statesmanship, there seems to exist still sufficient evidence about his importance as a minister of the early kings of Vijayanagara and as the *jagadguru* of Sringeri. In the colophon of the *Parāśara Mādhavīya*, which is accepted unreservedly as a work of Mādhava, the author calls himself the "minister (*amātya*) Mādhava who was the bearer of the burden of the sovereignty of King Bukka".[40] Furthermore, Sāyaṇa, Mādhava's famous younger brother, also mentions in the opening verses of his *Puruṣārtha-Sudhānidhi* that his brother, Mādhava, was a hereditary preceptor and minister (*mantrin*) of king Bukka.[41] And the colophon of the *Mādhavīya Dhātuvṛtti* also describes Mādhava as a great minister (*mahā-mantrin*) of Saṅgama II who was the son of Kamparāja and thus a nephew of Harihara I and Bukka.[42] From the other contemporary sources we know that Mādhava's younger brothers, too, had close relations with the early rulers of Vijayanagara. According to the colophon of Sāyaṇa's works he was a minister of Bukka I, Harihara II, Kampa and Saṅgama II.[43] And an inscription from Bitragunta of the year 1356 shows that another

---

[40] Rao Bahadur R. Narasimhachar, Mādhavāchārya and his Younger Brothers, in: *The Quarterly Journal of the Mythic Society*, 7 (1917), pp. 318-320. - I am particularly grateful to Dr. V. Filliozat for her help in all matters concerning the "identification" of Vidyāraṇya-Mādhava.

[41] Narasimhachar, op.cit., p. 319.

[42] P.V. Kane, *History of Dharmaśāstra*, p. 789.

[43] Ibid., p. 781.

brother, Bhoganātha, was a *narmasaciva* ('minister of amusement') of Saṅgama II.[44]

The Mādhava-Vidyāraṇya problem is further complicated by the fact that besides this l i t e r a r y evidence, we possess substantial e p i g r a p h i c a l evidence about the existence of a minister Mādhava who served for nearly half a century, from 1347 till 1391, under several rulers of Vijayanagara. In an inscription from Hejje, near the western coast, of the year 1347, this Mādhava is mentioned as a minister (*mantrin*) of prince Mārappa, the younger brother of king Harihara I. He is praised for his knowledge of the Vedas, Purāṇas and Saṃhitās and for having composed "a work consisting of the essence of all Śaiva āgamas" (*samasta-śaivāgama-sāra-saṃgraha*). Furthermore, this inscription mentions Kriyāśakti as Mādhava's guru.[45] From the year 1368 we possess two inscriptions which mention Mādhava as Great Minister (*mahāpradhāna*) and Governor of Banavasi near the western coast.[46] Most important for our knowledge about the identity of this minister Mādhava is the already mentioned inscription of the year 1368 which contains for the first time Bukka's full imperial titles and the name of the new capital Vijayanagara.[47] According to this inscription the minister (*amātya*) Mādhava belonged to the Āṅgīrasa *gotra*, his father was the Brahmin Cauṇḍa and his guru was Kāśivilāsakriyāśakti. The last inscription of this Mādhava is known from Goa from the year 1391.[48]

In the early historical writing on Vijayanagara the famous 'Mādhavācārya' whom we know from his literary works has been identified with this 'Mādhavamantrin' who is known from several

---

[44] Ibid., p. 789.

[45] Hejje inscription (see note 31), lines 85-88.

[46] Filliozat, nos. 88 and 90.

[47] See above, note 28.

[48] *ARMAD, 1929*, p. 129.

inscriptions.[49] It is beyond doubt that this identification has greatly enhanced the importance of Mādhava-Vidyāraṇya in early historical writing on Vijayanagara. But this identification has to be regarded as one of the many myths created by modern historians. It is therefore to be welcomed that Vasundhara Filliozat in her thesis on the inscriptions of early Vijayanagara again took up this problem. On the basis of her epigraphical studies she verified the conclusions of Rao Bahadur R. Narasimhachar. In an article on "Mādhavāchārya and his Younger Brothers" published already in 1917, Narasimhachar differentiated sharply between the minister Mādhava who ruled as a governor of Banavasi near the western coast under the kings Harihara I, Bukka I and Harihara II till 1391 on the one side, and the famous Mādhava *alias* Vidyāraṇya on the other. Narasimhachar pointed out that, according to the epigraphical evidence, the minister Mādhava firstly belonged to the Āṅgīrasa *gotra*, secondly his parents were Mācāmbikā and Cauṇḍabhaṭṭa and thirdly his guru was Kriyāśakti. In contrast to this, it is known from several literary works that Mādhava-Vidyāraṇya's parents were Śrīmatī and Māyaṇa of the Bhāradvāja *gotra* and that he was a disciple of Vidyātīrtha, Bhāratītīrtha and Śrīkaṇṭha.[50] As another criterion of this distinction of the two Mādhavas one may add the fact that the minister Mādhava twice described himself in his inscription of the year 1368 as "depending on his king Bukka's lotus feet" (*tat-pāda-padma-upajīvi*).[51] This expression, unthinkable for a saṃnyāsin, in my opinion finally excludes the possibility of identifying the minister Mādhava with Mādhava *alias* Vidyāraṇya. For the sake of clarity, it may be convenient to name these two Mādhavas as Mādhavamantrin and Mādhavācārya.

On the basis of this distinction between the two Mādhavas we are able to come to yet another conclusion, which again might be of great importance for our discussions. Mādhavācārya, if he really

---

[49] Even H. Heras still identified Mādhavācārya/Vidyāraṇya with Mādhavamantrin (H. Heras, *Beginnings of Vijayanagara History*, p. 18).

[50] This is mentioned in the *Parāśara-mādhavīya* and the *Kālanirṇaya*, see P.V. Kane, *History of Dharmaśāstra*, pp. 785 f.

[51] See note 47.

ever held any 'secular' post, was a minister of the kings Bukka I (1357-1377) and of his nephew Saṅgama II. Nothing, however, is known from these sources about any 'secular' activity of Mādhava under king Harihara I. Everybody who works on this or similar material is aware of the danger and risk to draw any conclusion from an *argumentum ex silentio*. But in our case, the cumulative evidence certainly justifies the hypothesis that contemporary literary evidence, too, confirms our inference that Mādhavācārya played no significant role in the foundation of Vijayanagara.

Before we are able to continue this process of 'cumulative verification' of our inference, we have at least to mention the problem of the identity of Mādhavācārya and Vidyāraṇya. This question arises from the fact that in none of the works of Mādhavācārya his name Vidyāranya is mentioned, nor does any of the later inscriptions which mention Vidyāraṇya refer to him under his earlier name Mādhava. But the identification can be derived from his own literary works.

For instance in the work *Jīvamuktiviveka*, which is ascribed to Vidyāraṇya, the author refers directly to his earlier commentary work on *Parāśara-smṛtī*. This latter work together with the *Parāśara-mādhavijaya* can safely be ascribed to Mādhava. Mainly on the basis of this literary evidence of cross-reference in his own works, the traditional identification of Mādhavācārya can be considered an established fact.

V

We may now turn our attention to Mādhavācārya *alias* Vidyāraṇya. It is generally accepted that he assumed this second name after he had become a *saṃnyāsin*. And it is this name under which he became known as the *mahant* and *jagadguru* of Sringeri. Already a first glance at the epigraphical evidence confirms our assumption that this change must have taken place only at an advanced age. This assumption seems to become nearly a certainty when we look at the famous inscriptions of Sringeri of the years 1346 and 1356 which are the earliest inscriptions known from Sringeri during the Vijayanagara period. The inscription of the year 1346 commemorates the *vijayotsava* of the five Saṅgama brothers. It begins with the praise of the great guru Vidyātīrtha. After mentioning the

participants of this ceremony, it contains a list of nine villages which king Harihara I donated to Bhāratītīrtha, his forty servants and his disciples at the *tīrtha* Sringeri (Filliozat, n. 14). Vidyāraṇya is not mentioned at all in this context. The same is true of the inscription of the year 1356, which commemorates king Bukka's visit to Sringeri. Again this donative inscription begins with a praise of Vidyātīrtha. This time Vidyātīrtha is mentioned as the donee of Bukka's gifts, too. What is most important in the context of our present discussion is the fact that Vidyāraṇya again is not mentioned in connection with Bukka's visit and donations to Sringeri in the year 1356. The non-existence of his name in these earliest inscriptions of Vijayanagara kings at Sringeri is in sharp contrast with later inscriptions, in which Vidyāraṇya is always mentioned together with Vidyātīrtha and Bhāratītīrtha (see below).

It is only in the year 1375, nearly thirty and twenty years respectively after the first appearance of Bhāratītīrtha and Vidyātīrtha in inscriptions at Sringeri that Vidyāraṇya, too, is referred to in an inscription at Kudupu (Filliozat, appendix n. 25). This inscription gives an account of the donation of the revenue of two villages to Vidyāraṇya-Śrīpāda, the head of Sringeri, for the maintenance of brahmins and the ritual at the Śaṅkara temple. Vidyāraṇya, therefore, must have taken over the *maṭha* at Sringeri some time between the years 1356 and 1375 A.D.

The *kaḍita* books[52] of the Sringeri *maṭha* contain the copy of an interesting inscription of king Harihara II (1377-1404). The inscription begins with an eloquent eulogy of the three great gurus: Vidyātīrtha, Vidyāraṇya and Bhāratītīrtha. After mentioning king Bukka's donations in the year 1356, it contains an interesting acccount of the circumstance of Vidyāraṇya's accession to the *pīṭa* of Sringeri:

> Subsequently Bukkarāya sent a *nirūpa* (order) of Hiriya-Śrīpadangaḷ (senior guru) and his own *binnavattaḷe* (letter of request) to Benares and a few days after the return of Vidyāraṇya-Śrīpāda to Virūpākṣa (Hampe) [Bukka] took him to Sringeri and desirous of providing for maintenance of the ascetics, disciples, attendant

---

52 The *kaḍita* ("acccount") books of Sringeri which run into several hundreds contain also copies of older inscriptions. Their authenticity is often very doubtful. See A.K. Shastry, *A History of Śriṅgēri*, Dharwad 1982, pp. 9 ff.

Brahmans and their families residing with Vidyāraṇya-Śrīpāda issued a *nirūpa* to Mādarasa (= Mādhavamantrin) directing him to grant [to Vidyāraṇya] lands.[53]

A very similar version of the story of Vidyāraṇya's accession to the *gadī* of Sringeri is known from Sringeri's *Guruvaṃśakāvya*.[54] It was composed in the 18th century, approximately at the same time when Harihara II's inscription of the year 1380 was copied for the *kaḍita*. Since we possess no further 'independent' source about Vidyāraṇya's stay at Banares, we have only the option to accept or to refute its historicity. But even if we assume that this story was 'fabricated', it would also show that Vidyāraṇya was absent from Sringeri for a considerable time. And we may even infer that the story was created in order to interpret the 'non-existence' of Vidyāraṇya in Sringeri before 1374/75 into a 'temporary absence'.[55] Whatever may be the truth, Vidyāraṇya was certainly in charge of Sringeri in the year 1375 A.D., the date of the above mentioned inscription of Kudupu. Since another *kaḍita* of Sringeri mentions that Bhāratītīrtha died in the year 1374,[56] it is quite likely that Vidyāraṇya was offered Bhāratītīrtha's successorship and the *gadī* of Sringeri during this time.

Shortly afterwards (1377), king Bukka I died and his son Harihara II ascended the throne of Vijayanagara. He became a great devotee of Vidyāraṇya. In one of his inscriptions it is mentioned that "by the glances full of love of Vidyāraṇya, the chief of

---

[53] *Kaḍita* copy of a copper plate grant of the reign of Harihara II of the year 1380. *ARMAD, 1933*, pp. 211-228, lines 66 ff.

[54] See *ARMAD*, 1933, p. 227. For the *Guruvaṃśakāvya* see A.K. Shastry: It was "composed in about A.D. 1735 by Kāśi Lakshmaṇa Śāstri, a contemporary of Śrī Satchitānanda Bhāratī II. [It] gives biographical sketches of the successive Āchāryas from Śaṅkara to Satchidānanda Bhāratī (A.S. 1705 - A.D. 1741)." (A.K. Shastry, *A History of Śriṅgēri*, p. 8).

[55] To 'interpret' the previous non-existence of a special aspect of a local cult or of a group of its priests into a "temporary absence" is a well-known literary topos. See, for instance, the legendary account about the "resettlement" of the 3000 Brahmin priests in Chidambaram by the saint Hiraṇyavarman. (See chapter 11).

[56] See *ARMAD, 1933*, pp. 266 f.

ascetics, he acquired the empire of knowledge [*jñāna-saṃrājya*] unattainable by other kings".[57] From the following years we possess quite a few inscriptions which prove Vidyāraṇya's important role as *mahant* of Sringeri. And, furthermore, they give evidence of the tremendous impact which he and his brother Sāyaṇa exercised on the religious revival in South India. In the year 1378 an inscription mentions that Harihara II donated land to Sāyaṇa and to two brahmin scholars.[58] These two scholars together with a third again received larger land grants in the year 1381 from Harihara's son Cikka Rāya and in the year 1386 from king Harihara II himself.[59] These brahmins are called authors or promoters (*pravartaka*) of the commentary on the four Vedas. And it is stated by the editor of this inscription "that the descendants of these three scholars received special honours at the Sringeri Maṭha and were the owners of the first, second and third houses at Sringeri town". These scholars, according to a *kaḍita* copy of an inscription of Harihara II,[60] are said to have received again a grant as a reward "for having brought out commentaries on the four Vedas in the name of the king" (*namma hesaralu caturvēdabhāsyagaḷa pravartisuva saṃbandha*). This is, of course, a clear hint at Sāyaṇa's renowned commentaries on the Vedas. But the editor of the inscription rightly complained that "no part of the present commentaries in the name of Sāyaṇa gives the names of the three scholars as authors or collaborators, nor does Sāyaṇa anywhere acknowledge their help."[61] In the year 1384 two other brahmin scholars, who were clearly named as disciples (*śiṣya*) of Vidyāraṇya, received land grants from

---

[57] Belugula inscription of the year 1384 (lines 29-31), *ARMAD, 1933*, p. 134.

[58] Epigraphia Carnatica, V, Chennarayapatna 256; see *ARMAD, 1934*, p. 116.

[59] The so-called Ināṃ Office (Bangalore) copper plate inscription of the year 1386, see R. Narasimhachar (ed.), *Archaeological Survey of Mysore, Annual Report: 1906-1909, vol. II, A Study* by S. Settar, Dharwad: Karnatak University, 1976, pp. 64 f.

[60] *Kaḍita* copy of an inscription of Harihara II of the year 1395, *ARMAD, 1934*, pp. 114-117. As this donation was performed in the presence of Vidyāraṇya, at least the date of this inscription (1395) is wrong because Vidyāraṇya already died in the year 1386.

[61] *ARMAD, 1934*, p. 115.

king Harihara II in the presence of god Virūpākṣa at Vijayanagara.[62] The great work done by these scholars was highly appreciated by king Harihara II. In fact, in several inscriptions the king himself was praised for his "protection of the Vedas and the twice born" (*vedadvijāti-parirakṣaṇa*)[63] or even as "establisher of the path of the Vedas" (*vaidika-mārga-pratiṣṭhāpaka*).[64] Harihara II's high estimation[65] of Vidyāraṇya became again very evident when Vidyāraṇya died in the year 1386. On the occasion of his death, Harihara donated to the Mahājanas of Sringeri the revenue income of several villages, amounting to 500 *gadyāṇa* (gold coins).[66] This was exactly double the amount which Harihara II's father and his four brothers had dedicated to Bhāritītīrtha during their famous *vijayotsava* at Sringeri in the year 1346.

All this evidence leaves us in no doubt about the important and most influential role which Vidyāraṇya played as a guru, scholar and *mahant* after he took charge of Sringeri in about 1374/75. But of equal relevance for our discussion is the obvious fact that none of these inscriptions mention or, at least, allude to any political function held by Vidyāraṇya during the early history of Vijayanagara. And, moreover, these inscriptions make it clear that although Vidyāraṇya was a great scholar - and certainly not only since the time when he is known to have become the *mahant* of Sringeri - he reached the highest level of hierocracy only in his old age.

---

[62] Belugula inscription, lines 41 d., *ARMAD, 1933*, p. 135; see above, note 35.

[63] Ibid., line 25.

[64] See note 59.

[65] This veneration was not restricted to the first two generations of Saṅgama rulers. An unfinished inscription at Srirangam mentions that even Harihara II's son, Virūpākṣa, had once paid a visit to Vidyāraṇya (*Annual Report - A.R.*, no. 54 of 1936-37; *SII*, vol. XXIV, no. 294). I am grateful to Dr. V. Filliozat for drawing my attention to this record. In a personal communication, she wrote: "The young prince must have met the sage during his young age. It is interesting to note that in a Shrivaishnava temple in the extreme South Vidyāraṇya's name is recorded in an epigraph. There are also other inscriptions of this prince in the same temple ranging from 1382 to 1387."

[66] Vidyāraṇyapura copper plate of Harihara II of the year 1386, lines 37 ff., *ARMAD*, 1933, PP. 140 f.

VI

Finally, we may now turn our attention to the most crucial problems of our discussion, i.e. Sringeri and its 'Saṅkara tradition'. It is universally agreed that the famous *maṭha* of Sringeri was established by the great Saṅkarācārya in the early 9th century.[67] From this southern *maṭha* he started his glorious *digvijaya*, the religious "conquest of the (four) quarters of the world", in the course of which he founded three Śaṅkarācārya-*maṭhas* at the other cardinal points of India, i.e. at Dwarka in the west, Badrinath in the north and Puri in the east. But an analysis of the epigraphical sources again reveals a completely different picture. The earliest inscription which refers to Sringeri in connection with its *maṭha* is the inscription of 1346. But even this first inscription refers to Sringeri only as a "place of pilgrimage" or "holy ford" (*tīrtha*) where Bhāratītīrtha and his followers were performing their services. Only in the year 1356, when Bukka I again donated the revenue income of several villages to Sringeri, is it stated that this income was meant for the maintenance of the service of the *maṭha* at Sringeri. This evidence, of course, does not yet suffice to prove that the *maṭha* was established only after the five brothers of the Saṅgama family had performed their *vijayotsava* at Sringeri. But from our previous experience with the historicity of hitherto seemingly established traditions of early Vijayanagara and its relations with Sringeri, it is important to try a new investigation into the traditions of Sringeri, too. A thorough analysis of all relevant sources is certainly beyond the scope of the present paper and the capacity of its author. But we may point out some facts - most of which are certainly already known, though usually they have been neglected or "by-passed" - and draw some hypothetical conclusions from them.

First of all, it is well known that no contemporary sources exist about the history of the Sringeri *maṭha* from Śaṅkarācārya up to

---

67 It is therefore not astonishing that A.K. Sastri's work on Sringeri begins with the sentence: "Śrī Śāradā *Pīṭha* (the *maṭha* or monastery) at Śriṅgēri was established about twelve hundred years ago by Śrī Ādi Śaṅkarāchārya". A.K. Shastry, *A History of Śriṅgēri*, p. 1.

the year 1346, when the five Saṅgama brothers paid a visit to Bhāratītīrtha at the *tīrtha* of Sringeri.[68] But Sringeri itself was not unknown in previous centuries. Epigraphical evidence clearly shows that Jainism was well established at Sringeri in the 12th century. The oldest inscriptions of Sringeri date back to the years 1150 and 1160 A.D. and they are found in the Pārśvanātha Basti.[69] In the first inscription, next to nothing is legible except a praise of the Jina-śāsana, and the second contains information about a donation of Jaina merchants. In view of the existence of a Jaina establishment at Sringeri in the 12th century, it is remarkable that Mādhavamantrin established an *agrahāra* village for Brahmins who were not only well-versed in many sciences but were also praised as "demolishers of Bauddha and Jain religions."[70] It may be a coincidence but it is nevertheless notable that this *agrahāra* with its significant name Saṅgamapura was founded in the year 1347, only one year after the known history of the Sringeri *maṭha* began under Bhāratītīrtha. This saint, too, is praised posthumously for having "toss[ed] up the Bauddhas [and] reduce[d] to powder in no time the teachings of the Kṣapanakas [Jainas]".[71] This rather scattered evidence certainly does not yet permit an established theory of a Jaina origin of Sringeri. But in view of these facts at least the hypothetical possibility cannot be ruled out any longer.

The landed property of the Sringeri *maṭha*, or rather the revenue income which was transferred to Sringeri during early Vijayanagara, is also of great singnificance. An analysis of the relevant inscriptions from the *vijayotsava* in the year 1346 till Vidyāraṇya's death in the year 1386 shows a tremendous increase of landed

---

[68] This fact is also clearly pointed out by A.K. Shastry in his recent study on Sringeri, op. cit., p. 5. His remarks are of particular relevance as he has worked for several years in the archives of Sringeri, particularly in order to classify and cataloque the *kaḍitas*.

[69] Inscription dated 1150 A.D. on a slab in the *mukhamaṇḍapa* of the Pārśvanātha basti of Sringeri (*ARMAD, 1934*, pp. 113 f.) and an inscription dated 1160 in the *navaraṅga* at the same place (*ARMAD, 1933*, pp. 122 ff.).

[70] Heddasse (Hejje) inscription (see above, note 31), line 60; in the case of Karnataka *ārahanmatotsedhakāḥ* referred mainly to the Jainas.

[71] *Kaḍita* copy of Harihara II's inscription of the year 1380, lines 9 f. (see note 53).

property of Sringeri. This increase is particularly remarkable during the initial phase in the years 1346 and 1356 and after 1374/75, when Vidyāraṇya had become the *mahant* of Sringeri. During the first ten years, Sringeri received the revenue income from villages amounting to 250 and 360 *gadyāṇas* (= 610 g.).[72] During the years of Vidyāraṇya's term of office, Sringeri and its scholarly Brahmins, however, received revenue income of various villages amounting to 1419 or even to 1871 *gadyāṇas*.[73] This increase demonstrates the importance of Sringeri under Vidyāraṇya and even more Vidyāraṇya's importance for the enhancement of Sringeri's greatness.

But even more interesting than this precipitous growth rate during e a r l y Vijayanagara is the question of Sringeri's property in the p r e - Vijayanagara period. Here we are in the fortunate position of not being forced to use only the *argumentum ex silentio* in the absence of earlier inscriptions. The inscription of Harihara II of the year 1380 A.D. contains a detailed list of all previous donations which the early rulers of Vijayanagara had dedicated to Sringeri since 1346. Harihara II reconfirmed these donations and added his own 'revenue gift'. As already mentioned, this inscription is known only from a *kaḍita* copy. It is certainly not advisable to rely fully on it, particularly since we know that its statements differ in some cases from those of the original inscriptions of the years 1346 and 1356 which Harihara II's inscription of the year 1380 (resp. its *kaḍita* copy) refers to.[74] It would certainly be interesting to know whether these 'mistakes', which increased the amount of the revenue gifts of the years 1346, were already 'fabricated' in the year 1380 in order to get them sanctioned by

---

[72] This amount is mentioned in the two inscriptions of the years 1346 and 1356 (Filliozat, nos. 14 and 43).

[73] This amount consists of donations by Bukka (222 g.) and Cikka Rāya (427 g.) as mentioned in the *kaḍita* copy of Harihara II's inscription of the year 1380; Harihara II's donation of the year 1384 (120 f., Belugula inscription); Harihara II's donation of the year 1386 (150 g., Inām office inscription); and Harihara II's donation of the year 1386 on the occasion of Vidyāraṇya's death (500 g., Vidyāraṇyapura inscription). In addition to these 1419 g. an amount of 425 g. may be added which was donated by Harihara II according to the wrongly dated inscription of the year 1395 (see note 60).

[74] According to this *kaḍita* copy, Harihara and Bukka donated land of the total revenue value of 928 *gadyāṇa* in the years 1346 and 1356.

Harihara II's new inscription. But what matters more at the moment is the fact that this inscription gives the impression of being a complete list of the landed property of Sringeri in the year 1380. Moreover the inscription contains a detailed description of the distribution of the revenue income among the Brahmins and several newly constructed temples at Sringeri.[75] However, Harihara II's inscription of the year 1380 as well as the other contemporary inscriptions of early Vijayanagara do not contain the slightest reference to any earlier land grants or to an older institution which had some connections with the *maṭha* of Sringeri which is mentioned in an inscription for the first time in the year 1356.

VII

Even more intriguing is the fact that none of these early inscriptions of Sringeri contain any reference to the great Śaṅkarācārya himself, reputedly the founder of Sringeri. The inscriptions could have easily provided their authors with the opportunity to mention the Ādiśaṅkara. A good example is the earliest inscription of the year 1346. It commences with a praise of the saint Vidyātīrtha, followed by a praise of Śiva and Viṣṇu and then explains details of the royal donations to the saint Bhāratītīrtha. Another particularly striking example is Harhara II's long donative inscription which he issued on the occasion of the death of Vidyāraṇya in the year 1386.[76] This inscription begins with the usual praise of Śiva and Viṣṇu (lines 1-5). Immediately after this invocation follows a long eulogy of the three great saints of Sringeri, i.e. Vidyātīrtha (lines 5-9), Vidyāraṇya (lines 9-16) and Bhāratītīrtha (lines 16-20). These three saints of Sringeri are mentioned again in lines 25-29 and Vidyāraṇya is particularly praised for his knowledge of "non-dualism" (*advaya, [sic]*). Śaṅkara, however, who was the founder of Advaitism and, allegedly, of Sringeri, too, is not mentioned. In the

---

[75] The temples mentioned in the Vidyāraṇyapura inscription of the year 1386 are *samādhi* temples of the three great saints. The names of these temples are Vidyāśaṅkara, Bhāratīrāmanātha, Vidyāviśveśvara. A temple of Janārdana is also mentioned in this inscription.

[76] Vidyāraṇyapura inscription; see note 63.

kaḍita copy of Harihara's inscription of the year 1380, Bhāratītīrtha is even praised for breaking up the doctrines of Bhaṭṭa (= Kumārila).[77] Kumārila was Śañjarācārya's guru and, after Śaṅkara had become an Advaitist, his strongest opponent. This mention of Kumārila would have certainly been an excellent opportunity to mention Śaṅkara himself.

Of course, no author of any inscription etc. of the 14th century was 'obliged' to mention Śānkara. But to ignore him completely in Sringeri at a time when it became the sacerdotal centre of a newly established Hindu empire is a fact which is certainly difficult to explain - if we assume that Śaṅkara had once established this *maṭha* at Sringeri. There are, generally speaking, two possibilities to explain this silence: Śaṅkara either never had any relations with Sringeri or he belonged to a completely different religious or philosophical tradition than the *maṭha* of Sringeri during Vijayanagara time. But since we know from inscriptions and later sources of Sringeri (e.g. the *Guruvaṃśakāvya*) that Sringeri adhered to Śaṅkara's teaching, it is most likely that the Sringeri *maṭha* of the 14th century had indeed nothing to do with the great Śaṅkarācārya.

This assumption attains near certainty when we take into consideration the *Śrī Puruṣottama Bhāratī Carita*. This text of the 15th century still exists in the archives of the *maṭha* at Sringeri. It contains 12 chapters and the first three chapters give a brief account "of the Ācharyās from Śrī Vidyāsaṇkara [Vidyātīrtha] to Śrī Chandraśekhara Bhārati II [1454-1464], and the rest deals with Śrī Puruṣōttama Bhārati [1408-1448], until his assumption of the pontificate at Hampi and taking over of the *Maṭha* administration in Śriṅgēri."[78] Particularly in the case of this text, which was also meant to give a history of the Sringeri *maṭha*, it is scarcely believable that its author would have missed the chance to trace Sringeri's history back to Śaṅkara - if he really had been its founder.

Already about two decades ago, the late Paul Hacker, the renowned German Indologist and specialist in Vedānta studies,

---

[77] *Kaḍita* copy of Harihara II's inscription of the year 1380, line 8; see note 53.

[78] A.K. Shastry, *History of Śriṅgēri*, p. 7.

summarized the results of his own studies on Śaṅkarācārya and his associations with Sringeri while critically reviewing J. Gonda's extensive study on Hinduism, which repeats the conventional story of Śaṅkara and his close relations with Sringeri.[79] In this connection Hacker drew our attention to the fact that none of the literary works which can be ascribed to Śaṅkara himself refers to anything like Śaṅkara's *digvijaya* throughout India during which he allegedly established the *advaita maṭhas* at the four cardinal points of India.[80] According to P. Hacker, this tradition clearly originates or was at least greatly enhanced by Vidyāraṇya, the author of the famous *Śaṅkaradigvijaya*. Hacker furthermore pointed out that according to his own research no genuine or historical reliable *guruvaṃśa* (or list of *mahants*) exists in these four *maṭhas* for the time prior to the fourteenth century.

These statements about the *Śaṅkaramaṭhas* have been fully corroborated by J. Lütt during his research on the *Śaṅkarācāryas* of Puri.[81] Although the Govardhanamaṭha in Puri, the foundation of which tradition ascribes to Śaṅkarācārya, looks quite old, no genuine historical documents are known of this matter which are older than the Maraṭha period.

From the literary evidence, Hacker inferred that the tradition of the *Śaṅkaramaṭhas* and thus also of Sringeri's association with Śaṅkara goes back only to Vidyāraṇya in the late 14th century. Together with his famous brother Sāyaṇa, the author of the *Vedabhāṣya*, Vidyāraṇya, tried to establish in an act of intentional cultural policy ("in einer Art bewußter Hindu-Kulturpolitik", Hacker), a new system of orthodoxy in order to counteract the influence of Islamic inroads into South India.

From the aforesaid it follows that the e p i g r a p h i c a l evidence clearly confirms Hacker's conclusions which he had drawn from his studies of the l i t e r a r y sources. Although it is far too early to come to any final conclusions, the following picture seems to emerge from this reassessment of the epigraphical

---

79 J. Gonda, *Die Religionen Indiens. II. Der jüngere Hinduismus,* Stuttgart 1963, p. 83.

80 P. Hacker, *Kleine Schriften*, ed. by L. Schmithausen, Wiesbaden 1978, pp. 478 ff.

81 J. Lütt, The Śaṅkarācāryas of Puri, in: *CJ*, pp. 411-419.

evidence. The early history of Sringeri is unknown but the earliest historical evidence which dates from the 12th century shows that it was a centre of Jainism. The earliest references to the existence of the *maṭha* is known from Bukka's inscription of the year 1356, but Bhāratītīrtha was already 'on the spot' in the year 1346. The fact that the *vijayotsava* of the Saṅgama brothers was held at Sringeri proves that it was already in 1346 a place of considerable importance. The epigraphical evidence does not provide any explanation of Sringeri's important role during the early years of Vijayanagara. It is equally evident that the epigraphical sources also do not allow any assumption that this importance was either based on the 'Vidyāraṇya tradition' or on the 'Śaṅkara tradition'. On the contrary, the hitherto known epigraphical evidence only allows the conclusion that Śaṅkara was not the founder of Sringeri's famous *maṭha*. The epigraphical sources therefore permit, at least hypothetically, the inference that the *maṭha* was established only some time between 1346 and 1356. In this initial phase, Vidyātīrtha and not Vidyāraṇya seems to have played the most important role.[82] As a good guru and 'professor' Vidyātīrtha was able to place his students Bhāratītīrtha and Vidyāraṇya on the *gadī* of the newly established *maṭha* at Sringeri.

The inscriptional evidence leaves no doubt that Sringeri became an important place only under Harihara I and Bukka I - perhaps because of its geographical location between the capitals of the old Hoysaḷa kingdom and the new Vijayanagara empire. But only after Vidyāraṇya had become the *mahant* of Sringeri in 1374/75 and Harihara II the king of Vijayanagara in the year 1377, did Sringeri's fame and wealth increase tremendously. It is quite

---

[82] P. Hacker, however, supposed that Vidyāraṇya played the decisive role already during this initial phase. Moreover Hacker came to the important conclusion: "In order to safeguard his teachings Vidyāraṇya established an institution, the Śaṅkaramaṭha. He created fictions which were unlikely to meet with opposition after the country had been totally devastated by the Muslims. He proclaimed that the maṭha had been founded by Śankara himself and that it had continuously existed since then. He nominated the old Vidyāraṇya as its mahant and announced that he had already been acting there since decades" [translation by H. Kulke] (Hacker, P., *Kleine Schriften*, p. 479). Hacker's assumption that Vidyāraṇya played an important role already during the early years of Vijayanagara seems to be based on Mādhava-Vidyāraṇya's wrong identification with Mādhavamantrin ("Vidyāraṇya [war] Minister des Königs von Vijayanagara, nachdem das Land von Moslems verwüstet worden ... war", ibid.).

plausible that exactly during this time Vidyāraṇya and his brother Sāyaṇa intensified their work to reconstruct Hindu orthodoxy with the active support of king Harihara II, who proudly called himself the "establisher of the Vedic path". Furthermore, it is quite likely that the activities of three saints and *mahants* of Sringeri partly influenced or even formed the basis of Sringeri's 'Śaṅkara tradition', e.g. their extensive literary activities, their - dubious - fame to have "demolished Bauddhas and Jainas" and to have even fought against the teachings of Kumārila and, finally, Vidyāranya's alleged *digvijaya* to Benares. All these details are familiar to us from the *Śaṅkaradigvijaya*, too. Sringeri's claim that its *maṭha* was founded by Śaṅkara and that afterwards Śaṅkara established in the course of his *digvijaya* three other *advaita mathas* at the cardinal points of India, put Sringeri at the centre of a new religious network covering India as a whole. Thus Sringeri's 'Śaṅkara tradition' provided a further legitimation to Vijayanagara's claim to be the centre of the new orthodoxy.

This interpretation of Sringeri's early history and its relations with early Vijayanagara should not be misunderstood as a deliberate destruction of the cherished traditions about Śaṅkara's role in the foundation of the *maṭha* at Sringeri and Vidyāraṅya's role in the foundation of Vijayanagara. On the contrary, if this interpretation can be verified by new sources, it would depict Vidyāraṇya's and Sāyaṇa's role in a much clearer historical light, because it proves that Vidyātīrtha, Bhāratītīrtha and the two brothers Vidyāraṇya and Sāyaṇa formed a most fascinating group of religious reformers and creators of a new religious institution. Due to their immense philosophical and literary activities their work had a tremendous impact on Hinduism which lasts till today. The fact that they had to 'share' a lot of their own activities with Saṅkara and that their version of Sringeri's and Vijayanagara's origin is still generally accepted is perhaps the best proof of their success.

This new interpretation may also be understood as an example of a gross manipulation of religious institutions. Not Sringeri and its *jagadguru* Vidyāraṇya established Vijayanagara, but the kings of Vijayanagara established Sringeri with its new 'Śaṅkara tradition' for their own political ends. But that is only half the truth .The new interpretation rather depicts the most intricate and mutual

relations beween *kṣatra* and *kṣetra*, the secular and sacerdotal realms in Indian history.[83] Though intricately interwoven, they both follow their own *Eigengesetzlichkeit* or *svadharma*.[84]

---

83 L. Dumont, The Conception of Kingship in Ancient India, in: *Religion, Politics and History in India*, Paris/The Hague 1970, pp. 62-88.

84 Dieter Conrad, Max Weber's conception of the Hindu Dharma as a Paradigm, in: *Recent Research on Max Weber's Studies of Hinduism*, ed. by D. Kantowsky, München 1986, pp. 169-192.

MAX WEBER'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE STUDY OF "HINDUIZATION" IN INDIA AND "INDIANIZATION" IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

The reaction to Max Weber's study on India[1] has been, and still is, contradictory. On the one hand, it is considered, mainly by the "Weberians", as the most fascinating part of Weber's contrasting study to his "Ethic of Protestantism and the Spirit of Capitalism". On the other hand, it is neglected or even disliked, mainly by Indologists, because of its many inconsistencies and gross generalizations. I myself am no exception to this ambiguous attitude. On a previous occasion I complained about Weber's strangely one-sided description of the medieval Hindu sects and tried my best to explain the possible reasons for this obvious misinterpretation or oversimplification of certain aspects of Hinduism.[2]

In the present paper I shall try to prove that Weber's study on India also contains a number of challenging ideas, some of which have not yet even been noticed by research scholars. I shall try to exemplify this mainly with his contribution to the concept of Hinduization. Moreover I shall point out the relevance of his concepts of legitimacy and the patrimonial state in the context of Indian history.

I

I would like to begin my delineations at this Max Weber conference organized by the Max Mueller Bhavan in Delhi with a

---

[1] Max Weber, *The Religion of India. Sociology of Hinduism and Buddhism*. Translated by H. Gerth and Don Martindale. Glencoe 1958 (= Translation of Max Weber, *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie*, vol. II, *Hinduismus und Buddhismus*, Tübingen 1920.)

[2] H. Kulke, Orthodoxe Restauration und hinduistische Sektenreligiosität im Werk Max Webers, in: *Max Webers Studie über Hinduismus und Buddhismus. Interpretation und Kritik*, ed. by W. Schluchter, Frankfurt/M. 1984, pp. 293-332.

reference to Max Müller. In a lecture delivered in Westminster Abbey in the year 1873 Max Müller distinguished between missionary religions (Buddhism, Islam and Christanity) and non-missionary religions (Judaism, Brahmanism and Zoroastrianism), the former being alive, the latter dying or dead.[3] It is understandable that this generalizing statement provoked vehement protests from scholars working on contemporary India, particularly since George Campbell had already pointed out in a report written in the year 1872 that "it is a great mistake to suppose that the Hindu religion is not proselytizing"[4]

It was Alfred C. Lyall who took up this matter at great length in his *Asiatic Studies* published in 1882. He contradicted Max Müller and pointed out that there were two modes of "Brahmanic propagation". The first of these modes is "the gradual Brahmanization of the aboriginal non-Aryan, or casteless tribes. Among all these aboriginal or non-Aryan communities a continous social change is going on; they alter their modes of life to suit improved conditions of existence; their languages decay and they gradually go over to the dominant Aryan rituals. They pass into Brahmanists (sic) by natural upward transition, which leads them to adopt the religion of the castes immediately above them in the social scale of the composite population among which they settle down. And we may reasonably guess that this process has been working for centuries".[5] The surest sign of a family's reception into Brahmanism is, according to Lyall, the invitation of a Brahman to officiate at the rites de passage of the family. And Lyall furthermore pointed out that "if the converted family are of standing among their own people, the Brahman will usually discover for them a decent Hindu pedigree, or a miraculous incident which proves a half savage chief or rich outcaste to be really allied to one of the recognized castes".[6] The second mode of proselytization, viz. the activities of devotees

---

[3] A.C. Lyall, *Asiatic Studies*, London 1882, p. 98.

[4] ibid., p. 104

[5] ibid., p. 104

[6] ibid., p. 103f

and spiritual leaders who found new sects, is only briefly mentioned by Lyall.

As pointed out recently by A. Höfer, A. Lyall thus most probably "was the first to formulate a sort of proto-theory of Sanskritization".[7] Lyall, however, seems to have been completely forgotten by future generations of scholars working on modes of social change in traditional India. Lyall's important statement on the modes of "Brahmanic propagation" is today remembered only through a short reference in H.H. Risley's *Tribes and Castes of Bengal* published in 1892.[8] Risley took up this matter in a broader context and pointed out four distinct processes which were involved in the transformation of tribes into castes.

1. The mobility of "leading men of an aboriginal tribe" according to the mode which Lyall had already referred to in the case of families who "are of standing among their own people". Risley illustrated this process with the example of the Mahārājas of Chota Nagpur and their recognition as Nagbansi Rajputs;
2. the mobility of members of a tribe, who embrace the tenets of Hindu religious sects (Vaiṣṇavas, Liṅgāyat. Rāmāyats etc.);
3. a whole tribe or a large section of it enrol themselves in the ranks of Hinduism as a new caste by accepting Brahmins and Brahmanical rites etc;
4. a whole tribe or a section of it is gradually converted to Hinduism without, however, losing its tribal designation or abandoning completely its tribal deities etc.[9]

It is quite evident that Risley's first two processes are more or less identical with the two modes already described by Lyall. And a scrutiny of both texts shows that Risley's last two processes, too,

[7] A. Höfer, On Re-reading *Le Népal*: What we Social Scientists Owe to Sylvain Lévi, in: *Kailash. A Journal of Himalaya Studies*, 8 (1979) 175-190.

[8] H.H. Risley, *Tribes and Castes of Bengal*, Calcutta 1892, p. XV.

[9] ibid., p. XVI f. In his Report on the Census of India of 1901 Risley repeated his earlier expositions verbatim with a few enlargements without, however, referring again to Lyall: *Census of India*, 1901, vol. I: *Report* by H.H. Risley and E.A. Gait, Calcutta 1903, p. 519 ff.

are at least partly covered by Lyall's first mode of "continued social change". Generally speaking Risley, despite the vast ethnographical material at his disposal, does not offer any substantially new explanation or even theoretical framework for his statements. Though it is still a matter for further research, it seems that the subject of transition of tribes into castes was taken up on a broader theoretical basis for the first time by Sylvain Lévi in the context of Nepal and by Max Weber in the context of India. Lévi published the three volumes of his monumental work *Le Népal* in the years 1905 and 1908,[10] whereas Max Weber's studies on India did not appear till 1916. Although Weber once mentioned S. Lévi in connection with Asoka and referred to an article published by Lévi in the year 1902 on the cultural role of Sanskrit in the early centuries A.D. (Weber 1958 : 347, 379), it is evident from Weber's very short chapter on Nepal (1958 : 282 f.) that he did not know S. Lévi's great work on that country.[11] This is certainly a major deficiency in Weber's otherwise astonishingly long reading list. In the context of our remarks on Max Weber's theory of Hinduization and its sources we therefore have to leave out Lévi's study on Nepal. Among his major sources Weber mentions the Census of India of the years 1901 and 1911 and the "general and provincial reports of Risley, the author of *Castes and Tribes of Bengal*, Blunt, Gait, and others (which) belong to the best general sociological literature available" (1958 : 344, fn. 1). For his study on Hinduization Weber's major sources were Risley's *Castes and Tribes of Bengal*, his above mentioned report on the Census of India of the year 1901 and - as will be shown - certainly Lyall as well, although Weber does not refer to him.

II

After a few introductory pages on India and Hinduism (1958: 3-9), the subject of Hinduization forms the first chapter of Max Weber's study on India. Obviously it served as a theoretical and

---

[10] S. Lévi, *Le Népal. Etude historique d'un royaume hindou*, 3 vols., Paris 1905 and 1908.

[11] In his short exposition on Nepal of less than one page Weber refers in a footnote only to the *Census Report of Bengal of the year 1901*.

historical introduction to his first part on the "Hindu Social System". According to Weber the present Hindu system spread in the course of about 800 years from a small region in northern India to the whole subcontinent. This "grand propaganda" was accomplished at the cost of the animistic folk belief and in conflict with the great salvation religions. Weber thus considered "Āryavarta" under the Guptas as the core region of this process, because the conflict with Buddhism as the major "salvation religion" ended about eight hundred years later when Buddhism was finally destroyed by Muslim invaders. But at the end of his chapter on the Hindu social system, Weber rightly mentioned a still earlier date of this process, most probably on the basis of the date of Manu's Dharmaśāstra: "For a thousand years, from the second century of our era to the beginning of Islamic rule, we find the caste system in an irresistible and ever-continued expansion, slowed down through the propaganda of Islamism." (1958:130)

Weber then continues to describe two types of Hinduization, viz. the *extensive* propaganda of Hinduism in tribal areas and the *intensive* propaganda within areas which were already under Hindu domination. The process of extensive Hinduization was initiated by the ruling stratum (*Herrenschicht*) of a tribal area through imitation of specific Hindu customs. This process usually began with abstention from meat and alcohol, the adoption of Hindu rites de passage. And sooner or later it led to the invitation of Brahmins who "provided testimony to the fact that they - the rulers of the tribe - were of ancient, only temporarily forgotten, knightly (Kṣatriya) blood" (1958:10). Hinduization of the tribal leaders was then completed by the performance of the sacred thread ceremony. After this change of status had been accomplished within their own tribal society, these new "Rajput" parvenus sought social intercourse through intermarriage with the equivalent social strata of the surrounding Hindu areas. Although many of these attempts usually did not succeed immediately, time and wealth (particularly large dowries to impoverished Rajputs) paved the way for these new Hindu rājās.

M. Weber then continues to analyze the second mode of Hinduization: "This extensive propaganda was paralleled by an intensive propaganda which followed similar principles" (1958:11). Weber, however, does not confine himself to a mere description of social

change and mobility among the lower strata of Hindu society. Instead he focusses his account of the second mode of Hinduization on the role played by the "guest peoples" (Gastvölker) or pariahs:

> The term pariah people in this special sense should not be taken to refer to any tribe of workers considered by a local community as 'strange', 'barbaric', or 'magically impure' unless they are at the same time wholly or predominantly a guest people. The purest form of this type is found when the people in question have totally lost their residential anchorage and hence are completely occupied economically in meeting demands of other settled peoples - the gypsies, for instance or, in another manner, the Jews of the Middle Ages.[12]

In India, as elsewhere, the main feature of these pariah peoples is less their absolute homelessness than their social separation from the main body of Hindu society and, at the same time, their complete economic dependence on it.

According to Weber these Indian guest peoples came into existence through population growth among the hill tribes, on the one hand, and the increasing demand for labour in the developing Hindu core areas, on the other. The increasing wealth of these centres created numerous low and unclean services which were taken over by outsiders when the resident population declined to perform them. The transition from the services of a still settled tribe to the work done by a pariah people is very fluid and passes through several transitional stages. And there are many degrees of segregation of these "unclean" guest workers even to the point of their exclusion from the village community, yet they are not considered outlaws. On the contrary, the village is obliged to compensate them for their service and usually reserves them a monopoly of their respective vocations. Their ritual rights and duties, too, are an expression of a legal position within the Hindu society which Weber calls a "negative Privilegierung",[13] a position

---

[12] Max Weber, 1958, p. 13. For Weber's famous definition of the "Pariavolk" see his *Economy and Society. An Outline of Interpretative Sociology*, transl. and ed. by G. Roth and C. Wittich, 2nd ed. Berkeley 1978, p. 304 and 386 ff.

[13] Max Weber 1920 (see above note 1), p. 13.

defined by "negative privileges".[14] Guest peoples thus slowly ceased to be tribes and became "unclean castes" (or outcastes) of Hindu society.

Weber points out that this social and economic "discriminatory integration"[15] was complemented by a rather slow process of Hinduization of tribal customs and beliefs, e.g. these outcastes may ask Brahmins to cast the horoscopes for marriages but they will still continue to ask their own priests to perform these family rites and festivals. "Sometimes assimilation (*Rezeption*) takes a mixed form, partially according to the type of extensive and partially according to the type of intensive propaganda; sometimes subdivisions of a tribe are received as guest people by several castes, while remaining subdivisions continue to exist without losing their form of tribal organization" (1958:15). It is evident that this "mixed form" of Hinduization is a reference to Risley's last two "processes", as mentioned.

Max Weber then raised the important question of the motives which encouraged the reception. For the Brahmins who acted as intermediaries in this process, the motive was mainly a materialistic one. They were interested "in opportunities for expanding income, ranging from service fees for the casting of horoscopes to prebends and the gifts due to house and sacrificial priests. Rich gifts of cattle, money, jewelry, and above all, land and land rent (pepper rent) were the compensation for Brahmins who provided the necessary 'proofs' of genteel descent for the Hinduized ruling stratum of an area undergoing assimilation" (1958: 16).

---

[14] The German terms *negative Privilegierung* or *negative privilegiert* which occur several times in Max Weber's study on Hinduization are translated wrongly as "underprivileged status position" or "underprivileged" (1958:14 and 17). In my opinion, "negative Privilegierung" refers to Weber's concept of the "positively defined legal position" of the pariah people. The paradox of their "negative Privilegierung" is based on their complete dependency upon their professional monopoly, the performance of which is essential for a society which, however, refuses them access to its community. The English translation "underprivileged status position" does not take into account this double aspect of the socio-economic position of the pariah people. Whenever quoting from RoI, I shall therefore correct the expression "underprivileged" to "negatively privileged".

[15] For a detailed study of the position of the outcastes in contemporary India see Eckehard Kulke, The Condition of Untouchables in India, in: *Social Inequality and Political Structures*, ed. by J.P. Neelsen, New Delhi 1983, pp. 39-66.

Whereas it seems to have been no problem to Weber to find this short explanation of the motives of the Brahmins, he was particularly fascinated by the motives of those groups which desired Hinduization. Because, according to Weber, "the 'tribes' which would be transformed into 'castes', particularly their ruling stratum assume an enslaving yoke (*Sklavenjoch*) of rituals hardly duplicated elsewhere in the world. They surrendered pleasures - for instance alcohol, which is relinquished in general only with great reluctance. What, then, was the reason?" (1958:16). His answer to this legitimate question most probably is one of Weber's most valuable and ingenious contributions to his Indian studies. As far as the ruling stratum was concerned, legitimation appears to have been the crucial motive because their integration into Hindu society legitimized their social status religiously. Moreover Weber comes to the important conclusion that Hinduization "not only endowed the ruling stratum of the barbarians with a recognized rank in the cultural world of Hinduism, but, through their transformation of castes, secured their superiority over the subject classes with an efficiency unsurpassed by any other religion" (1958:16). But is was not religious legitimation alone which made Hinduism so attractive to tribal leaders.

> "As the Slavic princes of the East called into their lands German priests, knights, merchants, and peasants, so the kings of the East Ganges Plain and of Southern India, up to the Tamils at the southern trip, called upon Brahmans trained in writing and administration. Their services were enlisted to assist the prince in formal organization, in the Hindu manner, of his patrimonial bureaucratic rule and status structure and to consecrate the prince as legitimate Raja and Maharaja in the sense of the Hindu Dharmashastras, Brahmanas, and Puranas. Telling documents of land-grants issued sometimes simultaneously to dozens, even hundreds of obviously immigrant Brahmans, are found dispersed throughout India." (1958:16 f.).

According to Weber similar interests in legitimation played a decisive role in the voluntary Hinduization of pariah peoples, although, apparently, they acquired only the humiliating position of an impure caste. "Yet, from the standpoint of Hinduism, they are impure anyway. ... Hence it is advantageous to secure monopoly over their work opportunities by being recognized as a

legitimate 'caste', however negatively privileged, rather than remaining an alien people." (1958:17). But Weber does not content himself with these 'materialistic' motives of pariah groups. He pointed out quite rightly that "perhaps, too, in the past, religious hopes were frequently an important factor in the Hinduization of such pariah peoples, for Hinduism holds out hopes to the socially oppressed strata" (ibid.). The influence of these religious hopes of the masses are dealt with by Weber in the context of the bhakti movement in the third part of his work. Max Weber then concludes with due caution.

> "The approximately correct view may be formulated provisionally: the internalization of the Hindu order by the negatively privileged strata, guest and pariah tribes, represents the adjustment of socially weak strata to given caste order, - the legitimation of their social and economic situation. However, the struggle for or against acceptance of Hinduism for entire territories generally was led by the rulers or ruling strata. In any case, the strongest motive for the assimilation of Hinduism was undoubtedly the desire for legitimation." (1958: 18)

As mentioned above, the sources used by Max Weber for his Hinduization theory are still apparent. There is, for instance, a direct reference to Risley's Census Report of the year 1901. In connection with the initial difficulties faced by the newly "created" tribal rājās and their genealogies, Risley relates the following story. The family legend of the Nāgavaṃśī Rājās of Chota Nagpur, which he once narrated, "was received with derisive merriment by a number of genuine Rajputs who attended a conference which I held at Mount Abu in 1900 for the purpose of organizing the Census of Rajputana. They had never heard of such a thing as Nagbansi Rajput, but they entirely appreciated the point of this story".[16] Weber refers to this story in exactly the same context: "A true, or today presumably true, Brahmin or Rajput will listen sympathetically and with good humor[17] to the origin legend of

---

[16] H.H. Risley and E.A. Gait, *Census of India 1901*, vol. I, *Report*, Calcutta 1903, p. 520. As this episode is not mentioned in Risley's *Castes and Tribes of Bengal* (published in 1892) it is likely that Weber used this Census Report of the year 1903.

[17] "mit verständnisvoller Heiterkeit", M. Weber 1920, p. 10.

such an upstart Rajput stratum, if, for example, an interested European relates it." (1958:11) And it is, as already mentioned above, also highly probable that Weber had used Lyall's *Asiatic Studies*, either directly or indirectly through other authors who based their work on Lyall's study, because it is Lyall who speaks of "Brahmanic propagation" in the context of his criticism of Max Müller's verdict against Brahmanism.[18] To my knowledge this expression has not been used by Risley in his writings. But the expression "propaganda" occurs again several times in Weber's chapter on Hinduization in a socio-economic context where one does not expect it.

But despite this discernible closeness to the sources which Weber had used for his study, their improvement by Weber is, nevertheless, considerable. This is particularly true if we look at the more theorectical analysis and conclusions of these three authors. It is certainly correct that Lyall may have been "the first to formulate a sort of proto-theory of Sanskritization" (A. Höfer), but he was not aware of the importance of his discovery in the broader context of India's historical development. Risley, too, restricted himself to a mere description of social processes. It has rightly been pointed out that Risley had already recorded almost all the essential details without, however, recognizing their "model character".[19] Weber, on the other hand, analyzed the different processes of Hinduization in their broader socio-economic and historical contexts and drew several important conclusions which are still of considerable relevance.

III

To begin with, his distinction between "intensive" and "extensive propaganda" or Hinduization is a major step forward in comparison to the rather unsystematic juxtaposition of social processes by his predecessors. In fact, Weber's distinction is a clear anticipation of two major topics brought out about half a century later by Indian sociologists and anthropologists, viz. the concept of "Sanskritiza-

---

[18] Lyall, op.cit., pp. 98 f.

[19] A. Höfer, op.cit., p. 187.

tion" formulated for the first time by M.N. Srinivas in the year 1952 and the concept of "Rajputization" which was developed by Surajit Sinha ten years later in 1962.

Sanskritization refers mainly to the "intensive" or internal Hinduization of the low castes and Weber's pariah peoples (*Gastvölker*, plural). According to Srinivas "a low caste was able, in a generation or two, to rise to a higher position in the hierarchy by adopting vegetarianism and teetotalism, and by Sanskritizing its ritual and pantheon. In short, it took over, as far as possible the customs, rites and beliefs of the Brahmins, and the adoption of the Brahmanic way of life by a low caste seems to have been frequent, though theoretically forbidden. This process has been called Sanskritization, in preference to Brahmanization, as certain Vedic rites are confined to Brahmins and the two other 'twice-born' castes".[20] Srinivas' concept of Sanskritization became a most influential concept in the discussions on social change in Indian society. At the same time, however, both the concept and the term itself have often been criticized, yet neither of them has been replaced. Under the influence of his critics Srinivas admitted some years later that he had "emphasized unduly the Brahmanical model of Sanskritization and ignored the other models - Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra".[21] He therefore paid more attention to Sanskritization among tribal and semi-tribal groups and emphasized the "Kshatriya model" of social change. He pointed out that once a caste or its local section "had captured political power it had to Sanskritize its ritual and style of life and lay claim to being Ksahatriya. It had to patronize (or even create!) Brahmins who would minister to it on ritual occasions, and produce an appropriate myth supporting the group's claim to Kshatriya status".[22]

The study of this "Kshatriya model" or Weber's "extensive propaganda" had meanwhile been taken up by Surajit Sinha in his comprehensive article on "State Formation and Rajput Myth in

---

[20] M.N. Srinivas, *Religion and Society among the Coorgs*, London 1952, p. 32.

[21] M.N. Srinivas, *Social Change in Modern India*, Berkeley 1966, p. 7.

[22] ibid. p. 32.

Tribal Central India". According to Sinha, state formation in the tribal belt of central India means that in a "equalitarian primitive clan-based tribal organization has adjusted itself to the centralized hierarchic, territorially oriented political developments".[23] According to Sinha this social development is called Rajputization if the initiative of this process has been taken by a "narrow lineage and single families" who dissociate themselves from the main body of their tribe and claim Rajput origin by means which were already described by Risley. This Rajputization, as Sinha furthermore shows, was often followed by a "secondary Rajputization" (my term) when the tribes tried to "re-associate" themselvers with their former tribal chiefs, who had meanwhile transformed themselves into Hindu rājās and Rajput Kṣatriyas and claimed Rajput origin for themselves. As has been shown by the present author elsewhere, Hinduization in tribal areas was often a by-product of "Kṣatrīyaization" of tribal leaders and their immediate surroundings.[24]

In recent years the discussion about Sanskritization has calmed down considerably. This is only partly due to the fact that the debate has reached certain conclusions. The major problem seems to be the contradictoriness between the "narrow" term Sanskritization and its broader social context. Particularly after Srinivas modified and enlarged his concept, it is used to cover all sorts of social change in traditional India, achieved by the adoption of "higher" customs and values. But it is evident that in many cases these customs and values do not belong to the Sanskrit tradition nor do the agents of this change belong to any group associated traditionally with Sanskrit learning. Not much seems to have changed since 1960 when Bailey wrote: "No-one seems to like the term. Even its author is prepared to discard it 'quickly and without regret', once a better term or terms are found. However inept, 'Sanskritization' is still in use."[25]

---

[23] Surajit Sinha, State Formation and Rajput Myth in Tribal Central India, in: *Man in India*, 42 (1962) 37.

[24] See above chapter 6.

[25] F.G. Bailey, *Tribe, Caste and Nation*, Manchester 1960, p. 158.

The concept of Rajputization appears to be much less controversial but again the term restricts its applicability outside Rajasthan mainly to the Moghul period and after and to areas north of the Deccan. Similar types of social changes which occurred in earlier periods and in the Deccan and the south, therefore, do not fit into the term Rajputization. We would, therefore, consider using the wider term "Hinduization" also for the whole process as depicted by Lyall more than a hundred years ago. And we may then furthermore distinguish, according to Max Weber's more general categories, between processes of intensive and extensive Hinduization.[26] It needs no further explanation that there are numerous transitional stages in these processes and that the process of extensive Hinduization in its later stage may turn into a process of intensive Hinduization. What matters here is the fact - as Weber most probably for the first time pointed out - that there are two distinct areas where these processes started, i.e. in the Hindu core area and its periphery. Once we accept this distinction we may again use the more specific terms Sanskritization and Rajputization for special modes of intensive and extensive Hinduization.

IV

Weber's short study on Hinduization contains a few more points which are worth mentioning in this context. Weber restricted the category of intensive Hinduization unduly to guest peoples or pariahs. Srinivas, however, proved that the same type of intensive Hinduization (which he calls Sanskritization) frequently also occurs among Hindu castes, though mainly among outcasts, many of them being former "guest-peoples". But what matters here is the fact that Weber introduced the pariahs or guest peoples as a separate category of a social group which is no longer a tribe and which has not yet been accepted as a Hindu caste. This category may be of great importance for the analysis of social stratification and social

---

[26] As mentioned above, Weber distinguished between the two modes of intensive and extensive propagation (*Propaganda*) in the context of Hinduization. Furthermore, he defines Hinduization as "transformation of tribes into castes" (1958:15). We are thus borrowing from Weber mainly his distinction between intensive and extensive, and are using Hinduization (instead of propagation) in its meanwhile fully established broader sense.

change on the fringes of the Hindu caste system. Because, at least as far as my knowledge goes, internal Hinduization is usually understood as a continuous process of social change leading from tribe to caste. The category of pariah people, however, will allow us to show that de-tribalization does not necessarily always lead directly to "castification".[27] A group might lose its tribal habitat and identity, yet remain outside the caste system as a guest people for generations or even centuries. Weber's intensive studies on pariahs and further works based on Weber's study have shown that pariahs are a world-wide phenomenon. It allows settled agrarian and urban societies to separate these "negatively privileged" groups from the main body of society. Weber's category of guest or pariah people may thus lead to a further analytical differentiation of the rather unspecific group of "out-castes" in Indian sociology.

V

Legitimation is yet another aspect of Weber's studies on Hinduization which deserves attention. Here again I have to admit my incompetence as a historian to give any definite statement about current sociological or ethnological theories. But, as far as I understand, the question of legitimation or legitimacy never played any important role in the discussions about Hinduization. This deficiency is perhaps less striking in the case of M.N. Srinivas' studies on Sanskritization but it is certainly peculiar in regard to S. Sinha's Rajputization theory. Because the Rajput model of mobility is in its essence not only an attempt to gain a higher status but, at the same time, to legitimize this new status through affiliation with Rajput traditions. Sinha shows clearly the social, economic and political consequences of Rajputization for the ruling strata of the tribes, but the question of the ideological motive and legitimation behind this movement does not come into the picture. But he points out the "upgrading or universalization of regional culture" as a factor which certainly influenced this mode of social change.

Max Weber, on the other hand, regards the "desire for legitimation" as the strongest motive for Hinduization. Weber's interest in

[27] A. Höfer, op.cit., p. 179.

the "legitimation capacity" of religious and traditional beliefs is not restricted to Hinduism. It is well known that he defines authority (*Herrschaft*) as legitimate domination and distinguishes his famous "three pure types of authority" (i.e. legal authority, traditional authority and charismatic authority) according to their different basis of legitimacy. "Experience shows that in no instance does domination voluntarily limit itself to the appeal to material or affectual or ideal motives as a basis for its continuance. In addition every such system attempts to establish and to cultivate the belief in its legitimacy. But according to the kind of legitimacy which is claimed, the type of obedience, the kind of administrative staff developed to guarantee it, and the mode of exersising authority, will all differ fundamentally. Equally fundamental is the variation in effect. Hence, it is useful to classify the types of domination according to the kind of claim to legitimacy typically made by each."[28]

Weber's elaborate studies on legitimacy are of special significance in the light of recent research on the origin of the state and early state formation. There seems to be a general agreement among scholars that any such evolution that went beyond lineage-based chieftaincies required new world-views and religious beliefs to solve the crucial problems of traditional societies. The process of extensive Hinduization and particularly the mode of Rajputization as described by S. Sinha reflects precisely this development from lineage-based chieftaincies to the "Early State" or Patrimonial State, in Weber's terminology. Time does not permit me to give a detailed description of the supposed "enablers" of this development which have become a major issue in current anthropological research.[29] Suffice it to point out that the Early States never depended solely on mere military coercion and the existence of a new type of administrative staff. Legitimacy was always of equal importance. The crucial problem of all these early societies was the legitimation of the new and hitherto unknown social stratification and the unequal access to the means of production or, more generally

---

[28] Max Weber, 1978, p. 213.

[29] H. Claessen and P. Skalnik (ed.), *The Early State*, The Hague 1978; see particularly R. Cohen, "State Origin: A Reappraisal", ibid., p. 31-75.

speaking how to distribute socially produced wealth unequally yet legitimately.[30]

M. Weber was perhaps the first scholar to point out the importance of Hinduization in this broader context of socio-economic change and early state formation. Thus he stated that: "what interests us here is the assimilative power of the Hindu life order due to its legitimation of social rank and, not to be forgotten, possible related economic advantages" (1958:20). And in connection with Hindu restoration in the medieval period he concluded: "Decisive, however, was the fact that Hinduism could provide an incomparable religious support for legitimation interest of the ruling strata" (1958:18).[31] A particular aspect of Weber's study on legitimation seems to be of great relevance for the study of motives of Hinduization. As already mentioned, Weber pointed out that Hinduism endowed the ruling stratum of a tribe not only with a recognized status in the wider world of Hindu society, but also secured its superior status over the castes of their former tribe "with an efficiency unsurpassed by any other religion". Although Weber mentions this double aspect of legitimacy just in one sentence, it is perhaps one of his most interesting contributions to the analysis of the socio-economic function of Hinduization. Because it is exactly this double function which made Hinduism so attractive for upstarts among tribal chiefs, a fact which has hitherto been - more or less - neglected. Elsewhere I have tried to distinguish in the context of early state formation in Orissa between vertical (or internal) and horizontal (or external) legitimation. Vertical legitimation aimed at the consolidation of the newly established Hindu kingship in the Hindu-tribal frontier through patronizing local tribal deities and priests and acknowledging their cult as tutelary deities. Horizontal legitimation, on the other hand, aimed at acknowledgement by the neighbouring Hindu rājās

---

[30] See also Jürgen Habermas, *Legitimationsprobleme im Spätkapitalismus,* Frankfurt 1973, p. 33 ff.

[31] In this connection see also R.S. Sharma, (*Indian Feudalism: c. 300-1200,* Calcutta 1965, p. 281): "The significance of landgrants to brāhmaṇas is not difficult to appreciate. The grantees brought new knowledge which improved cultivation and inculcated in the aborigines a sense of loyalty to the established order upheld by the rulers."

through invitation of Brahmins and the construction of Hindu temples at the new capitals of the newly Hinduized tribal chiefs.[32]

VI

It seems to be equally unknown to "Indianists" and "Weberians" that the deepest and most challenging influence of Weber's Hinduization concept, if not of his study on Hinduism and Buddhism as a whole, most likely did not take place in the field of Indian studies but in Indonesian and - more general - Southeast Asian studies. In 1934 Jacob Cornelis van Leur, a young 26 year-old Dutch scholar submitted his thesis which was published only posthumously by the Royal Tropical Institute, Amsterdam in the year 1955 in an English translation under the title "Indonesian Trade and Society".[33] In his dissertation van Leur "made an attempt at analyzing early Asian society with the aid of the methodology of sociology and economic history developed by Max Weber - a methodology which at least for Indonesian history had not yet been applied. That van Leur came to such surprising and often revolutionary conclusions lay not only in the method applied, however, but just as much in the broad, catholic knowledge and the sharply critical attitude regarding the theories current at the time which despite his youth he was able to bring to bear. ... He has thrown the limelight of a new methology on source material long since published and thereby enriched the historical discipline with a number of new hypotheses."[34]

One of van Leur's new and perhaps his most "revolutionary" hypotheses referred to the concept of the so-called "Indianization" of Southeast Asia. Ever since European scholars began to realize the deep impact of Indian culture on Southeast Asia, "the tendency was to regard these things as the result of a movement of Indian

32 See above chapter 6.

33 J.C. van Leur, *Indonesian Trade and Society. Essays in Asian Social and Economic History*, The Hague 1955.

34 Foreword by the Editors of the English translation of van Leur's thesis, op.cit., pp. V f.

expansion eastwards. Attempts therefore were directed towards explaining it in terms of Indian conditions, South-East Asia was at the receiving end and played a passive role".[35] The major problems of these discussions were: when did Indian influence reach South-east Asia, which part of India contributed most and who were the Indian transmitters of this Indian expansion, i.e. warriors, traders or Brahmins and Buddhist monks? The answers to the latter question have been grouped accordingly as Kṣatriya, Vaiśya or Brahmaṇa theories.[36] During the early decades of our century the Kṣatriya theory became most influential among historians of Southeast Asia. It ascribed the transmission of Indian culture to Southeast Asia to Indian princes and kings who crossed the Bay of Bengal with all their retinue and founded strong "Indian" or "Hindu" kingdoms in Southeast Asia. Most prominent among the supporters of this theory were Indian historians. In 1926 the "Greater India Society" was established and a year later R.C. Majumdar began to publish his monograph series "Ancient Indian Colonies in the Far East". In a series of lectures which he delivered in 1941 and which were republished in the year 1979, Majumdar came to the following conclusions:

> Intercourse in this region first began by way of trade, both by land and sea. But soon it developed into regular colonization, and Indians established political authority in various parts of the vast Asiatic continent that lay to the south of China and to the east and southeast of India. The Hindu colonists brought with them the whole framework of their culture and civilization and this was transplanted in its entirety among the people who had not yet emerged from their primitive barbarism.[37]

---

[35] D.G.E. Hall, *A History of South-East Asia*, 2nd ed., New York 1966, pp. 15f.

[36] Hall, op.cit., p. 19; I.W. Mabbett, The 'Indianization' of Southeast Asia (Part. II): Reflections on the Historical Sources, in: *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 8 (1977) 143.

[37] R.C. Majumdar, *Greater India* (Sain Dass Memorial Lectures) Sholapur 1940, p. 21. Van Leur refers in this connection to R.K. Mookerji *Indian Shipping: A History of the Seaborne Trade and Maritime Activities of the Indian from the Earliest Times* (London 1912). "Mookerji, who constructs a Hindu imperialism occupying the shores and hinterlands of Farther India and Indonesia through the course of the centuries ... goes to the furthest in nationalistic self-exultation." (van Leur, 91).

The nationalistic undertone of Majumdar's assumptions was not subscribed to by all Indian, still less by European scholars. But his basic argument, i.e. the "transplantation" of India's (more or less) entire civilization among the (more or less) uncivilized peoples of Southeast Asia was the accepted theory among historians[38] - till van Leur came out with his new theory which "uncompromisingly accords primacy to indigenous initiative".[39]

A major point of van Leur's explanation of India's influence in Southeast Asia is his comparison with the spread of North Indian culture to South India. According to van Leur "the chief disseminator of the process of 'Indianization' (of the Deccan and the Dravidian South) was the Brahman priesthood. The aim of the 'Brahmin mission' was not the preaching of any revealed doctrine of salvation, but the ritualistic and bureaucratic subjugation and organization of the newly entered regions".[40] Whereas van Leur refers in this connection in a footnote to Weber's further studies on Hinduism, he quotes the long passage from Weber[41] (which has already been quoted above) in order to explain the role of the Brahmins who were "called upon" by the kings of Southern India. Van Leur again refers in a footnote to several portions of Weber's study while pointing out that this process was going on in South India around the beginning of the Christian era.[42] Then he continues:

> Southern India was the trading region for Indonesia. By means of that trade, whether carried on as Indonesian shipping or through the intermediacy of Indian shipping, the Indonesian

---

[38] E.g. N.J. Krom, *Hindoue-Javaansche geschiedenis,* The Hague 1926; C.C. Berg, *Hoofdlijnen der Javaansche litteratuurgeschiedenis* , Groningen 1929. Even G. Coedès' major opus, originally published in Hanoi in 1944 *(Histoire ancienne des états hindouisés d'Extrême-Orient),* is not free from this "India centric" interpretation of Southeast Asian history.

[39] I.W. Mabbett, op.cit., p. 143.

[40] van Leur, op.cit., p. 91.

[41] Max Weber, 1920, p. 167.

[42] van Leur, op.cit., p. 98, note 38.

> rulers and aristocratic groups came into contact with India, perhaps seeing it with their own eyes. In the same sort of attempt at legitimizing their interest ... and organizing and domesticating their states and subjects, they called Indian civilization to the east - that is to say, they summoned the Brahman priesthood to their courts.[43]

And a few pages later van Leur partly repeats these arguments, again referring in several footnotes to Max Weber's studies on Hinduism and Buddhism.

> The initiative for the coming of Indian civilization emanated from the Indonesian ruling groups, or was at least an affair of both the Indonesian dynasties and the Indian hierocracy. ... The course of events amounted essentially to a summoning to Indonesia of Brahman priests and Indian court artificers. ... The Indian priesthood was called eastwards - certainly because of its wide renown - for the magical, sacral legitimation of dynastic interests and the domestication of subjects, and probably for the organization of the ruler's territory into a state.[44]

The correspondence between van Leur's and Max Weber's argumentation is striking. In fact, van Leur's refutation of the hitherto established Kṣatriya theory of "Indianization" of Southeast Asia is based on (and partly identical with) Weber's theory of "external Hinduization" in India. In several footnotes and quotations from Weber van Leur himself leaves no doubt about his dependence on Weber's study on Hinduization. The very central point of their argumentation is the statement that neither the pre-Aryan tribes of central and South India nor those in Southeast Asia were subdued by invaders who superimposed their statecraft and culture upon them and finally converted them to Hinduism (or Buddhism). Both in India (according to Weber) and Indonesia (according to van Leur) it was the indigenous rulers who invited or "summoned" (van Leur) the Brahmins to their courts, primarily for the purpose of legitimation of their new social status. In this connection van Leur even quotes Weber's concluding remark: "The struggle for or against acceptance of Hinduism ... generally was led

---

[43] ibid., p. 98.

[44] ibid., pp. 103 f.

by the rulers or ruling strata; in any case the strongest motive for the assimilation of Hinduism was undoubtedly the desire for legitimation."[45]

As another important reason which led to external Hinduization in India and to "Indianization" of Southeast Asia, both Weber and van Leur mention concurrently the ability of the Brahmins to organize "the ruler's territory into a (patrimonial) state".[46] And according to van Leur the rulers invited the Brahmins for "the domestication of (their) subjects".[47] This is again a phrase which van Leur adopted directly from Weber who regarded the Brahmanical theory as most helpful and successful for the "religious domestication of the subjects" and who speaks several times of "means of domestication" or "domestication interest" of the rulers.[48]

Finally, one may point out another case of a rather strange correspondence between van Leur and Max Weber. As already mentioned above, van Leur quoted a long passage from Weber in which Weber compared the process of external Hinduization with the German medieval "Ostkolonisation".[49] In a concluding remark van Leur repeats this comparison: "One must imagine that Southeast Asia was 'Hinduized' in the same way the German civilization of the middle ages extended its influence far beyond the limits of German group colonization, in the same way the Graeco-Byzantine hierocracy set its stamp on the civilization of Russia."[50] Van Leur thus rightly differentiated between "German group civilization", to which Weber refers, and German influence in the "further East", particularly in Russia. It seems to be evident that van Leur's "keyword" of "summoning the Brahman priesthood to the courts" of Indonesia was directly influenced by (or even derived from)

---

[45] ibid., p. 349, note 37; Max Weber 1920, p. 18.

[46] van Leur, op.cit., p. 104.

[47] ibid.

[48] M. Weber, 1920, pp. 130 f.

[49] ibid., pp. 16 f.

[50] van Leur, op.cit., p. 104.

Weber's reference to the Slavic princes who "called upon" (Weber: *riefen*) German priests etc. to their countries.

"Van Leur did not survive to see his life work recognized, not even in the Netherlands. It was only after the war that his writings began to attract the attention of more than a very restricted circle of scholars."[51] In this regard F.D.K. Bosch's famous inaugural lecture at the University of Leiden in the year 1946 on problems of the Hindu colonization in the Indonesian archipelago has to be regarded as a major breakthrough as it essentially confirmed van Leur's erstwhile "heretical hypotheses". Van Leur's sometimes rather extreme positions meanwhile have been modified by more recent studies.[52] But nowadays no research on Southeast Asian history is thinkable on the basis of the status quo ante - before the translation of van Leur's thesis was published in the year 1955. van Leur's emphasis on the "primacy of indigenous (Southeast Asian) initiative" has thus to be regarded as a major contribution to modern Southeast Asian studies.

It is astonishing that the most direct impact of Weber's Hinduization theory is not felt in Indian but in Indonesian and Southeast Asian studies. This remarkable fact most probably has to be explained in terms of the colonial history of South and Southeast Asia. In Great Britain and thus in India, too, till recently Weber's studies on India remained relatively unknown, particularly to anthropologists. In the Netherlands, however, scholars had direct access to Weber's original German work which, furthermore, was intellectually much nearer to them than to British scholars. Thus Weber's Indian studies entered "Greater India" via Indonesia. But it is quite likely that his Hinduization theory which in the Indian context too "accords primacy to indigenous initiative" (Mabbett: 144) will gain importance in India, once scholars working on India concede to the indigenous tribal elements a greater share in Indian history and culture.

---

51 van Leur, Foreword of the Editors, p. VIII.

52 I.W. Mabbett, op.cit., pp. 144 ff; see also P. Wheatley, *The Golden Khersonese V. Studies in the Historical Geography of the Malay Peninsula before A.D. 1500,* Kuala Lumpur 1961.

THE EARLY AND THE IMPERIAL KINGDOM IN SOUTHEAST ASIAN HISTORY*

I

The early States of Southeast Asia were equipped by modern historiography with more or less all Weberian criteria of a modern State. Accordingly, these early States were governed by the kings through a central administrative staff which was able to uphold successfully the legitimate claim of the monopoly of physical force within a given area.[1] Successful pillages of neighbouring areas were therefore often understood as annexations and rather vague tributary relations were interpreted as an indicator of the existence of an hierarchically-structured system of provinces and districts etc.

Let me illustrate this interpretation of early Southeast Asian history by two examples selected from two certainly "unsuspicious" authors whose works are still regarded as standard works. About early Funan L.P. Briggs wrote in the year 1951: "From a little river-settlement governed by a naked girl, to an empire more than a thousand miles in extent, with boundaries perhaps as wide as those of which the proudest Khmer Emperor could later boast, in less than two centuries, is no small achievement for any people in any period."[2] Recent research however, particularly by C. Jacques, has shown that nearly none of these statements can be accepted any

---

* The research here reported was assisted by a grant awarded in 1977 by the Joint Committee on Southeast Asia of the Social Science Research Council and the American Council of Learned Societes. The author expresses again his thanks to these institutions and to the German Research Council and the Southasia Institute, Heidelberg University. Furthermore he acknowledges with gratitude the support and advice he received from the National Research Centre of Archaeology, Jakarta, Drs. S. Suleiman, its former Director, and from Professor Boechari, Universitas Indonesia.

[1] Max Weber, *Economy and Society*, ed. by G. Roth and C. Wittich, Berkeley 1968, Vol. I, p. 53f.

[2] L.P. Briggs, *The Ancient Khmer Empire*, Philadelphia 1951, p. 18.

longer as established facts.[3] Funan's history neither began as a river settlement under the legendary naked Naga princess, nor do we have any proof that the alleged conquests of the Funanese King Fan Shi-Man led to a permanent annexation of areas far beyond the Mekong and even Menam delta.

The other example refers to the famous quotation from the New History of the T'ang about the kingdom of Holing which most probably was located in Java. The relevant passage in the *Hsin T'ang shu* is as follows: "on the borders [of Ho-ling] there are 28 small countries, all of which owe allegiance to Ho-ling. There are 32 great ministers and the Ta-tso-kan-hsiung is the chief of them."[4] Heine-Geldern, in his even more famous article on "Conceptions of State and Kingship in Southeast Asia", quoted this passage to illustrate the cosmic role of kings, courts and governments in Southeast Asia. But he also inferred from this passage "that the kingdom of Java in the 9th century was divided into twenty-eight provinces, their governors together with the four ministers having numbered thirty-two high officials.(...) It is clear that in all these cases the empire was conceived as an image of the heavenly world of stars and gods".[5] We shall come back later on to the function of these cosmological speculations. What matters here is Heine-Geldern's obvious misinterpretation of the Chinese text when speaking of twenty-eight *governors* of the twenty-eight *provinces* of the Javanese empire. None of these words is mentioned in the text. Instead, it seems to be clear from the text that the ruler of Holing was the *primus inter pares* among a large number of ministers and that his State was surrounded by twenty-eight small tributary countries. They were in all probability a permanent threat to the authority of the central ruler rather than integrated provinces of an empire.

---

[3] C. Jacques, 'Funan', 'Zhenla'. The Reality Concealed by these Chinese Views of Indochina", in: *Early South East Asia*, ed. by R.B. Smith and W. Watson, Oxford University Press 1979, pp. 371-9.

[4] Quoted from O.W. Wolters, *Early Indonesian Commerce. A Study of the Origins of Srivijaya*, Cornell University Press, 1967, p. 216.

[5] R. Heine-Geldern, "Conceptions of State and Kingship in Southeast Asia", in: *Far Eastern Quarterly*, 2 (1942) p. 21.

If we look at the standard works of Southeast Asian history - and certainly also of South Asian history - we may find quite a few other examples which show that some of the early "empires" of this region might well be the products of modern historiography rather than ancient history. And we may even come to the hypothetical conclusion that modern historians fell victim to a rather "sinister conspiracy" of ancient Indian and Chinese philosophers, historians and official scribes to conceal the historical truth, because it is well known that ancient Indian thinkers and their Southeast Asian contemporaries described the *śāstric* theory of the State, whereas the court poets and authors of the inscriptions primarily aimed at a mastery of the highly-sophisticated art of poetry. None of them therefore cared for a (detailed) description of, for example, the actual structures of a state and its real borders. On the other hand, Chinese official scribes of the *Hung lu ssu*, the office which was responsible for "the reception arrangements for foreign envoys and also the recording of details about their countries",[6] were certainly deeply interested in the actual situation among the "barbarians of the South". But in their reports, which they prepared for their emperor and which later on became available to historians, they "translated" the information not only into their own language but also into their own officialese. Its idiom was deeply pervaded by the Chinese conception of their own centralized State. According to O.W. Wolters, Chinese writers were thus "unable to conceptualize 'Funan' as being anything other than a 'state', albeit an unstable one, and, because of this Chinese perspective, 'Funan' has become the earliest Southeast Asian example of what sociologists refer to as a 'patrimonial bureaucracy', a model that does not seem to fit the prehistoric evidence".[7]

II

Evidence provided by more recent prehistoric and proto-historic archaeological research shows "that by the beginning of the

---

6 O.W. Wolters, op.cit., p. 188.

7 O.W. Wolters, *History, Culture and Region in Southeast Asian Perspectives*, Singapore 1982, p. 13.

Christian era a patchwork of small settlement networks of great antiquity stretched across the map of Southeast Asia".[8] It is particularly this new evidence,[9] and an increasing awareness of its relevance for an evaluation of the historical period of Southeast Asia combined with a hitherto unknown open-mindedness on the part of historians to anthropological theories that has initiated a process of far-reaching and even radical reconsideration of the early history of Southeast Asia. Thus we are no longer able to think in terms of a "transplantation theory" which starts out from the assumption that a ready-made (Indian) concept of State and statecraft was "transplanted"[10] to the virgin soil of Southeast Asia. Instead two problems, amongst others, have become major issues of current research. First, not "Indianization" but "indigenization" or "localization"[11] of foreign influences have become key-words of research and second, the persistence of indigenous, prehistoric "pre-State" structures throughout history.

"Multiplicity of centres" has become another key-word and a helpful tool for analytical research on the early State in Southeast Asia. For pre-Angkorian Cambodia, for instance, O.W. Wolters noticed that the "evidence reflects the multiplicity of regional centres in the land which, for convenience, we call 'Cambodia'. And he concluded that "in this situation the term 'kingdom' [...] is an inappropriate one. Greater unities were still only the fragile consequence of the prowess of an individual leader. This kind of unity quickly dissolved when an overlord died or lost the confidence of his allies".[12] In Java, scholars like F.H. van Naerssen

---

[8] Ibid., p. 2.

[9] I.W. Mabbett, "The 'Indianization' of Southeast Asia. Reflections on the Prehistoric Sources", in: *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 8 (1977) pp. 1-14.

[10] Even G. Coedès spoke of "this Sanskrit or Indian Civilization transplanted into Southeast Asia" and again of "the Indian civilization of Southeast Asia" (*Indianized States of Southeast Asia*, Hawaii 1968, p. 16).

[11] O.W. Wolters, op.cit. (note 7), p. 57 ff.

[12] O.W. Wolters, "North-Western Cambodia in the Seventh Century", in: *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 37 (1974) p. 371 and 383.

spoke of a "polykraton concept of the Hindu-Javanese period"[13] and inferred from epigraphical evidence that during the early Javanese period till the late 9th century A.D., "there were several independent rulers, some of them enjoying the title *mahārāja* and others without that title".[14] And Boechari even concluded that "what remained unchanged during the whole [old-Javanese] period was that there never had been a centralized government. The kingdom was divided into a number of autonomous areas, governed by *rakais* or *rakryans* [who] could act independently from the king".[15]

The concept of a "multicentred political system" is certainly a most necessary new approach which provides, perhaps for the first time in Southeast Asian historiography, a framework for an analytical study of the actual structure of the early State in Southeast Asia. It seems to be of particular relevance for a study of early historical political systems as they are known, for instance, from Chenla[16] or in Burma during the pre-Pagan period and larger parts of the pre-Singhasari history. To my knowledge this concept, however, has rarely been applied to the larger states of Southeast Asia during the 9th to 14th centuries. It was O.W. Wolters who again took the lead in this debate. In a chapter on "Historical Patterns in Intra-regional Relations" in his recent work on "Southeast Asian Perspectives" he introduced the *maṇḍala* concept of ancient Indian political literature into the discussion about the structure of the larger states of pre-colonial Southeast Asia.

"The map of earlier Southeast Asia which evolved from the prehistoric networks of small settlement and reveals itself in

---

[13] F.H. van Naerssen, "Tribute to the God and Tribute to the King", in: *Southeast Asian History and Historiography*, ed. by C.D. Cowan and O.W. Wolters, Ithaca 1976, p. 298.

[14] F.H. van Naerssen, op.cit., p. 297 and F.H. van Naerssen and R.C. de Jong, *The Economic and Administrative History of Early Indonesia*, Leiden 1977.

[15] Boechari, "A Preliminary Note on the Study of Old-Javanese Civil Administration", in: *Madjalah ilmu-ilmu sastra Indonesia*, 1 (1963) pp. 122-33; quoted from F.H. van Naerssen, op.cit. (note 13).

[16] C. Jacques, op.cit. (fn.3).

historical records was a patchwork of often overlapping *maṇḍalas*, or 'circles of kings'. In each of these *maṇḍalas*, one king, identified with divine and 'universal' authority, claimed personal hegemony over other rulers in his *maṇḍala* who in theory were his obedient allies and vassals. [...] In practice, the *maṇḍala* (Sanskrit term used in Indian manuals of government) represented a particular and often unstable political situation in a vaguely definable geographical area without fixed boundaries and where smaller centres tended to look in all directions for security. *Maṇḍalas* would expand and contract in concertina-like fashion. Each one contained several tributary rulers, some of whom would repudiate their vassal status when the opportunity arose and try to build up their own networks of vassals. Only the *maṇḍala* overlord had the prerogative of receiving tribute-bearing envoys; he himself would despatch officials who represented his superior status."[17]

Wolters explains his *maṇḍala* concept with a "glance at some of the famous *maṇḍalas* which adorn the textbooks on earlier Southeast Asian history" namely the Thai-kingdoms of Ayudhyā and Bangkok, the Śrīvijayan *maṇḍala* ("the notorious uncertainty about its geographical span and political identity is a striking instance of the amorphous nature of the great *maṇḍalas* in earlier Southeast Asian history", p.22), the Philippines and the Javanese *maṇḍala* of Majapahit. In all these cases the development of these famous *maṇḍalas* "depended on the waxing and waning of particular *maṇḍala* centres [...] which never led to new and more enduring political systems. [...] The single exception to an otherwise ephemeral political scene is that part of the Angkorian *maṇḍala* which comprised the Khmer-speaking people".[18]

It is this notion of a persistence of prehistoric elements as the dominant structural feature even of the larger states of early Southeast Asia which will be the focal point of the present paper. The period which covers roughly the millenium between 500 and 1500 A.D. is the period in which the results of more recent

---

[17] O.W. Wolters, op.cit. (note 7) p.16 f.

[18] Ibid., p.27.

historical research differ most radically from those of the earlier or "conventional" historiography, both in India and Southeast Asia. Let me explain this by a few examples. The different interpretation of the mediaeval Indian State under the Cōḷas and the Pālas by Nilakanta Sastri and R.C. Majumdar on the one side, and by Burton Stein and R.S. Sharma on the other are as symptomatic of this controversy in the context of Indian historiography[19] as are the different interpretations of the States of Funan and Śrīvijaya by L.P. Briggs and G. Coedès on the one side and by C. Jacques and Bennet Bronson on the other in the context of Southeast Asian historiography.[20] The basic difference between the earlier and the more recent historiography is the contradictory estimation of the role and structure of the early State. These two "schools" ascribe a very different position to the early State in a continuum of governance formations from a tribal or "stateless" form of government to a unitary centralized "empire state". The conventional school places the early State in the final position of this continuum of pre-modern State formation. But its adherents never really analyzed the socio-economic basis of the process which led to the emergence of the early State. They took it more or less as a given fact derived either from an earlier state or from models of theoretical *śāstra* texts. Contemporary historiography with its anthropological models on the other hand ascribes a position to the early State which is much lower down the scale than the unitary State of the conventional school. Mainly on the basis of anthropological models it is assumed that the early State developed "from below". But this development reached only a certain level

---

19 K.A.N. Sastri, *The Cōḷas*, Madras 1955; B. Stein, "The Segmentary State in South Indian History", in: *Realm and Region in Traditional India*, ed. by R.G. Fox, New Delhi 1977, pp.3-51; R.C. Majumdar, *The History of Bengal*, Vol. I, Patna 1971; R.S. Sharma, *Indian Feudalism*, Calcutta 1965.

20 L.P. Briggs, op.cit.; Claude Jacques, op.cit.; G. Coedès, "Le Royaume de Crivijaya", in: *BEFEO*, 18 (1918) 1-36; B. Bronson, "The Archaeology of Sumatra and Problem of Srivijaya", in: R.B. Smith and W. Watson (eds), op.cit. (note 3), pp. 395-405).

which, because of inherent structural problems, the early State was unable to transcend.[21]

A third school which plays an influential role in contemporary Indian historiography is the Marxist-influenced *Indian School of Feudalism.*[22] According to this school, the Hindu State of early mediaeval India was the result of a continuous process of fragmentation of a former unitary State through feudalization. This fragmentation was caused "by the wide-spread practice of granting big and small territories to vassals and officials who entrenched themselves territorially and ended up as independent potentates".[23] From an analytical point of view, the anthropologically-oriented historiography and the School of Indian Feudalism come to rather similar conclusions. The main structural feature of the early State is the above-mentioned "multiplicity of centres" which was responsible for the obviously insurmountable political stagnation. Both schools however differ completely in their explanation of the historical process out of which the early State of the whole region emerged.

As a student of Indology I was trained to look at the early State in India and Southeast Asia from the "religious point of view" and to study the "Hindu political thought and its metaphysical foundations".[24] But the results of intensive fieldwork in the Hindu-tribal

---

[21] H. Kulke, "Fragmentation and Segmentation versus Integration? Reflections on the Concepts of Indian Feudalism and the Segmentary State in Indian History", in *Studies in History* (Delhi, JNU) 4,2 (1982) pp.237-63.

[22] The major contribution is R.S. Sharma's work on Indian Feudalism (see note 19). For a discussion about this "School" see my above-mentioned article (note 21) and the recent contribution by B.D. Chattopadhyaya, "Political Processes and Structure of Polity in Early Medieval India: Problems of Perspective", Presidential Address, Ancient India Section, Indian History Congress, 22-24.12.1983.

[23] R.S. Sharma, op.cit., p.159.

[24] J. Gonda, *Ancient Indian Kingship from the Religious Point of View*, Leiden 1966; V.P. Varma, *Studies in Hindu Political Thought and its Metaphysical Foundations*, Delhi 1954.

frontier in eastern India, particularly in Orissa[25] and later on in Java, convinced me of the inadequacy of this approach for a study of the process of state formation in India and Southeast Asia. I began to understand the early State as a result of a continuous process "from below". And I was fascinated by the "discovery" of many "pre-State" elements, because they had either been completely neglected by ancient *Dharmaśāstras* and modern textbooks alike, or discarded as mere pre-historic relics, rather than accepted as constituent structural elements of the early historical state. But in the course of my further research, and particularly through reading the relevant anthropologically-oriented historical studies,[26] I was beginning to doubt the applicability of the anthropologically-oriented models for the whole process of premodern State formation in India and Southeast Asia, particularly the larger States of these regions. As a consequence of these doubts I drafted a conceptual framework which tries to differentiate between several distinct phases and which reveals a decreasing applicability of these models. Although these different phases were part of an overall (though not homogeneous) process of state formation, the respective State of each of these phases faced different structural problems and developed different means to cope with them.

III

As I have shown elsewhere,[27] the process of state formation usually passed through three successive phases, i.e. the local, regional and imperial phases or levels. Very generally speaking, the

[25] H. Kulke, *Jagannātha-Kult and Gajapati-Königtum. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte religiöser Legitimation hinduistischer Herrscher*, Wiesbaden 1979; A. Eschmann, H. Kulke, G.C. Tripathi (eds), *The Cult of Jagannath and the Regional Tradition of Orissa*, New Delhi 1978.

[26] e.g.: M.H. Fried, *The Evolution of Political Society*, New York 1967; E.R. Service, *Origins of the State and Civilization. Process of Cultural Evolution*, New York 1975; H.J.M. Claessen and P. Skalnik (eds), *The Early State*, The Hague 1978; R. Cohen, "State Origins: A Reappraisal", in: H.J.M. Claessen, op.cit., pp.31-76.

[27] H. Kulke, "Early State Formation and Ritual Policy in East Java", unpublished paper, Eighth Conference of the International Association of Historians of Asia, Kuala Lumpur 1980.

first step always had to be the successful establishment and consolidation of a solid local power within a limited territory. In many cases this power might have been founded by a "big man" or "man of prowess"[28] but usually it led to the establishment of a new form of control over a clan or tribe by a privileged lineage and its "elder" or leader. Chieftaincy is usually the term which is used for this pristine level of political development. It is characterized by the absence of any sort of institutionalized bureaucracy. Yet its authority had to be based on the legitimation to extract, at least temporarily, socially-produced surpluses from the surrounding land, and to mobilize men even from outside the leader's own lineage in order to protect the land and its own position. Anthropologists have shown that nearly all tribal societies provided a legitimate societal framework for the establishment of these chieftaincies.[29] It is unnecessary to point out that it is in this early period of state formation in Southeast Asia where anthropological models are most important and helpful for an analytical study. In fact, without these models historians often seem to overinterpret or even misinterpret the very few sources we possess about this early period.

The process of state formation entered the second or regional state when the leader of the "nuclear areas"[30] of local power was able to extend his authority beyond its territorial borders. This phase usually began with the military conquest of one or several neighbouring local nuclear areas. But during this period military conquest led neither to the annihilation or replacement of the existing political authorities, nor to a direct unification of these newly conquered areas with the centre. The defeated leaders were usually reinstalled as tributary chiefs. But this second step involved much more than a mere military conquest which, moreover, was

---

[28] O.W. Wolters, op.cit. (note 7), p.6 ff.

[29] See e.g. Lance Castles, "Statelessness and Stateforming Tendencies among the Batak before Colonial Rule", in: *Pre-colonial State Systems in Southeast Asia*, ed. by Anthony Reid and Lance Castles, Kuala Lumpur 1975, pp.67-76.

[30] For the concept of the "nuclear area" in the context of South Indian history see B. Stein, "Integration of the Agrarian System of South India", in: *Land Control and Social Structure*, ed. by R.E. Frykenberg, Wisconsin 1969, pp. 175-216.

usually only temporary. It required the establishment of permanent and legitimate relations with the conquered areas and their leaders.

Two inscriptions from Java and Orissa in eastern India are particularly informative with regard to the emergence of local chieftains as early *rājās*.[31] Best known is of course King Mūlavarman through his yūpa inscriptions of Kutei in east Kalimantan which are dated palaeographically to about 400 A.D. In a few lines they describe, better than any other known document of this period, the rise of a family within three generations. The grandfather Kuṇḍuṅga, though already called "Lord-of-men" (*narendra*), still bore a purely indigenous name. It was Kuṇḍuṅga's son who assumed the name Aśvavarman and became known as the founder of the dynasty (*vaṃśa-kartṛ*). His son Mūlavarman was the first to bear the title of *rājā*. He performed great sacrifices and donated immense wealth, land and many cows to Brāhmaṇas "who had come here" (*iha-āgata*) as is explicitly mentioned in one of the inscriptions. He ruled over his *kraton* (called *pura* in this Sanskrit inscription) which he illuminated magnificently. But most important for our discussion, Mūlavarman, as the son of the founder of a ruling local lineage (*vaṃśa*), initiated the second stage of early state formation. He defeated other landlords (*pārthiva*) and made them "tribute givers" (*kara-dā*). The use of the title *pārthiva* in this connection seems to be very significant. Of course, it is often translated as "prince" or even "king". But more than most other conventional royal titles, *pārthiva* has the original meaning of a landholder (*pārthiva* = earthly, coming from the earth). *Pārthiva* thus designates exactly the local landlord whom we know from Java as *raka*. Mūlavarman obviously had defeated several of them in his neighbourhood, but he confirmed them in their legitimate local rights on the condition that they "give" (*dā*) tribute (*kara*).

From the other side of the Bay of Bengal we know another interesting example of the rise of an autochthonous leader during the same period. It comes from southern Orissa, from one of the typical riverine nuclear areas of early state formation and relates to the origin of the Śailodbhava dynasty, which once had wrongly been

---

[31] For the inscriptions see B. Ch. Chhabra, *Expansion of Indo-Aryan Culture during Pallava Rule (as evidenced by inscriptions)*, Delhi 1965, Appendix, p.85 ff.

identified as the progenitors of the Śailendras of Java.[32] Several inscriptions of the later Śailodbhava kings relate to the story of Pulindasena, a famous man of Kaliṅga who was tired of ruling the world. On his request the Great God granted a boon to him and created a new king out of pieces of a rock (*śilā-śakala udbhedī*). Pulindasena named him Śailodbhava ("one whose origin is the mountain") and thus founded the dynasty (*parikalpita-vaṃśa*).[33] Both names, Pulindasena and Śailodbhava, point to a tribal origin of the dynasty. The Pulindas are a well-known tribe of central India.[34] Pulindasena, who bears no royal or princely title, therefore may well have been a military chief (*sena*) of this tribe settled near the famous Mahendragiri, which in the inscriptions is called the "Great Family Mountain" (*bṛhat-kula-giri*). Pulindasena's successor adopted a Sanskrit name and became the founder of a local dynasty after leaving his hilly homelands and settling in (or conquering?) the fertile valley of the Rishikulya.[35] The inscriptions, however, leave no doubt that it took several generations till they were able to consolidate their rule in the riverine nuclear area and to perform their first great horse sacrifice.

Traditional equalitarian chieftaincies did not usually provide a legitimation for this new type of domination. It is most likely that in exactly this situation Hinduism and the idea of the universal Hindu ruler within a very limited territory began to spread to many countries on both sides of the Bay of Bengal. The idea of Hindu kingship provided an institutional framework and a new ideological legitimation for an already existing indigenous political development. And, as we already know from the slightly earlier develop-

---

[32] R.C. Majumdar, *Ancient Indian Colonies in the Far East, II: Suvarṇadvīpa*, Dacca 1937, p.225 f.

[33] See e.g., "Banpur Plates of Madhyamarāja", ed. by D.C. Sircar, in: *Epigraphia Indica*, XXX, pp.32-38.

[34] B.C. Law, *Tribes in Ancient India*, 2nd ed., Poona 1973, p.174 f.

[35] For further examples from Orissa see: H. Kulke, "Early State Formation and Royal Legitimation in Tribal Areas of Eastern India", in: *Studia Ethnologica I: Aspects of Tribal Life in South Asia*, ed. by R. Moser and M.K. Gautam, Bern 1978, pp.29-37 and J.G. de Casparis, "Inscriptions and South Asian Dynastic Traditions", in: *Tradition and Politics in South Asia*, ed. by R.J. Moore, New Delhi 1979, pp.103-27.

ment in India, Hinduism at that time was perhaps the most adaptive religious and social system which was open to many aspects of "localization". But it is certainly correct to argue that legitimation was not the only attraction of Hinduism for tribal leaders. As pointed out by Wolters, Hinduism must have been particularly attractive for "men of prowess" because of its highly developed system of magical power derived from meditation (*tapas*).[36]

The early State which emerged from this struggle among several "nuclear areas" and their "men of prowess" will be called the Early Kingdom. Its leader usually acquired a new title, e.g. *Rājā* or even *Mahārāja*. But despite the various royal paraphernalia which surrounded these new *rājās* and their courts, they remained basically a *primus inter pares* among the local leaders throughout this period. The structural weakness of this political system was the precarious position of the *rājā*. His tributary chiefs outside his own nuclear area were often of the same stock and had therefore, at least theoretically, the same chances to become a *rājā* once they were able to prove their own "prowess".

The political system of these "early kingdoms" was characterized by a "multiplicity" of local political centres and shifting loyalties of their leaders, particularly at the periphery of their system. In the context of these early kingdoms Wolters is right when he states that "the king's status was unique only because it was a religious one".[37] And in the context of this early stage of development I agree with B. Stein who wrote about the later Cōḷa State of South India that it was only the "ritual sovereignty which converted a congeries of local political systems into a segmentary state".[38] And, as already mentioned, it is particularly this period to which I would suggest applying Wolters' *maṇḍala* concept.

---

[36] O.W. Wolters, "Khmer Hinduism", in: R.B. Smith and W. Watson (eds), op.cit. (note 3), pp. 427-42.

[37] O.W. Wolters, op.cit. (note 7), p. 19.

[38] B. Stein, op.cit. (note 19), p.16.

IV

The numerous Early Kingdoms with their precarious balance of power, shared by the central authority of a *primus inter pares* and the centrifugal local polities, were the dominant feature of the political map of Southeast Asia throughout the first millennium A.D. At the end of this period, however, a new development began which changed this political map considerably during the first centuries of the second millennium. During this period a small number of supraregional powers emerged which dominated the whole area. This process began in the early 9th century in Angkor which dominated larger parts of continental Southeast Asia from the 11th to the early 13th centuries. About a hundred years later this role was taken over by the Thai kingdom of Ayudhyā. From the middle of the 11th century until the end of the 13th century Pagan ruled over the larger parts of western continental Southeast Asia. And after two only temporarily successful attempts in the 9th century under the Śailendras and the Mataram dynasty, and under Airlangga in the 11th century, Java joined in during the 13th century under Singhasāri and became the leading power of the islands under Majapahit in the 14th century. Only Śrīvijaya in the western "Insulinde" and Campa in the eastern part of continental Southeast Asia remained unchanged. It would certainly be interesting to know whether the complete disappearance of these two polities from the political map of Southeast Asia was at least partly caused by their unchanging structure in contrast to the new emerging powers of Pagan, Angkor, Majapahit and Vietnam. These states will be called Imperial Kingdoms.

It is of course a justifiable question whether these states were an "exception to an otherwise ephemeral political scene", as Wolters described Angkor.[39] Or in other words: was the difference between the Early and the Imperial Kingdoms only a temporary and territorial expansion? Did perhaps even Angkor thus remain

---

[39] See also in this connection K.R. Hall, "An Introductory Essay on Southeast Asian Statecraft in the Classical Period", in: *Explorations in Early Southeast Asian History: The Origins of Southeast Asian Statecraft*, ed. by K.R. Hall and J.K. Whitmore, University of Michigan 1976, pp.1-24; Denys Lombard, "Le concept d'empire en Asie du Sud-Est", in: *Le Concept d'Empire*, ed. by M. Duverger, Paris 1980, pp.433-41.

just an enlarged version of Chenla, and do we have to depict the State of Majaphait in equal terms with the State of Kadiri? Another possibility to explain the existence of these Imperial Kingdoms is the assumption that some structural changes took place in Southeast Asia around 1000 A.D. which enabled a few imperial "men of prowess" to transcend the limitation of the Early Kingdom and to initiate a third or imperial phase of state formation in Southeast Asia. The answer to these questions depends on how much evidence can be brought forward in favour of either a basically unchanging continuity of "pre-State structures", or in favour of a structural change. In the context of this paper I shall emphasize indicators and possible reasons for this change.

The first and perhaps most obvious change was the new territorial dimension of the Imperial Kingdoms. But it was not a mere enlargement of the area of the former Early Kingdom. The significant new feature was that the empire was based territorially on the forcible unification of two or even several core areas of former independent Early Kingdoms. And it was no longer a matter of subordination of the former "regional" leaders of these annexed areas but their complete extinction as autonomous authorities. Usually they were replaced by members of the central dynasty or by deserving persons from the administrative or military staff. Only by a considerable and permanent enlargement of the core area, to which the imperial dynasty had direct and uncontested access (in order to legitimately tap its resources), was an Imperial Kingdom of this third phase able to last longer than the lifetime of a "man of prowess".

V

This process is perhaps best discernible in the early history of Angkor[40] and in eastern Java. The history of East Java is characterized by a sequence of several futile and very few successful attempts to unify the whole of Eastern Java under one dynasty and thus to establish an East Javanese empire. The rule of King Sindok

40 O.W. Wolters, "Jayavarman II's Military Power: The Territorial Foundation of the Angkorian Empire", in: *JRAS*, 1973, pp. 21-30; C. Jacques, "Etudes d'épigraphie cambodgienne. VIII. La carrière de Jayavarman II", in: *BEFEO*, 59 (1972) 205-20.

in the early 10th century, King Airlangga in the early 11th century, and the kingdoms of Singhasāri and Majapahit after 1222 A.D. are usually accepted as periods of successful unification of Eastern Java. Epigraphical evidence, however, proves that the region under the direct control of Airlangga (1016-1049) was more or less restricted to the delta region of the Brantas and Solo rivers and their adjacent areas. Though he was able to establish himself as the most powerful ruler of East Java, it was only this nuclear area of his Early Kingdom where his inscriptions have been discovered and where, most probably, his still unidentified capital Kahuripan was situated. Although he claims in an inscription in the year 1041 to have conquered the Southern region, which he contemptuously calls "utterly uncivilized" or literally "unaryanized" (*adhika-anaryya*),[41] he was never able to occupy or even annex the other two nuclear areas of Eastern Java around Kaḍiri/Blitar and Singhasāri. Hence the alleged division of the whole of Eastern Java by Airlangga into Janggala and Panjalu refers only to a division of his own Early Kingdom in the delta region, as has been proved by Boechari.[42]

The rule of Airlangga and his immediate successors was followed by a long interruption in the epigraphical evidence till the year 1117, when we come across the first inscription of a ruler of Kaḍiri. For more than a hundred years, till 1222 A.D., an uninterrupted sequence of kings is known to have ruled from Kaḍiri over the middle portion of the Brantas valley.[43] During this century East Javanese history became the history of the Early Kingdom of Kaḍiri. No other important kings are known to have ruled during this period in the upcountry around Singhasāri and in the lower delta region. But we have also no evidence that Kaḍiri tried or even succeeded in conquering these areas outside its own nuclear area.

---

[41] For the text of the inscription see B.R. Chatterji, *History of Indonesia, Early and Medieval*, Meerut 1967, pp.171-84.

[42] Boechari, "Sri Maharaja Mapanji Garasakan, a new evidence on the problem of Airlangga's partition of his kingdom", in: *Madjalah ilmu-ilmu sastra Indonesia*, 4 (1968) 1-25.

[43] N.J. Krom, "De vorsten van Kediri, 1038-1144 (saka)", in: *TBG*, 56 (1914) 242-52.

It was only during the Singhasāri period that the foundation stone of an Imperial Kingdom was laid in Eastern Java. Founded by Ken Angrok in the year 1222, the kingdom of Singhasāri seems to have been firmly established as the foremost power of Java only under the kings Viṣṇuvardhana and Kertanagara who ruled between 1248 and 1292 A.D. Although Singhasāri defeated Kaḍiri and certainly established its power at the cost of Kaḍiri, it was obviously not able to annex Kaḍiri completely and extinguish its rulers.[44] From the *Nagarakertāgama* we know that throughout the whole Singhasāri period three Kaḍiri kings ruled as tributary kings (*sāmanta-rāja*).[45] Despite the extension of its ("ritual"?) authority over Bali and parts of Sumatra, Singhasāri thus seems to have remained an extended Early Kingdom. The precarious position of Singhasāri was dramatically highlighted when Jayakatwang, the *sāmanta-rāja* of Kaḍiri,[46] looted the capital Singhasāri and killed its king in the year 1292 A.D.

It was only under King Wijaya, a relative of King Kertanagara, that the newly-established kingdom of Majapahit was able to annex Kaḍiri completely. For the first time since King Sindok in the 10th century, the three nuclear areas of Eastern Java, Singhasāri, Kaḍiri and the delta area with Majapahit, became united under one dynasty. It extinguished all local *rājās* in this region, which became the new and considerable enlarged core area of the empire of Majapahit. The annexation of the neighbouring areas, however,

---

[44] G. Coedès, however, is of the opinion that Kadiri "became an integral part of the kingdom of Tumapel" (Singhasari) already under Angrok, op.cit. (note 10), p.187. On Angrok see: Boechari, "Ken Angrok - Bastard Son of Tungul Ametun?", in: *Majalah ilmu-ilmu sastra Indonesia*, 6,1 (1975) 15-33 and idem, "The Inscription of Mūla Maluru. A New Evidence on the Historicity of Ken Angrok", in: *Majalah Arkeologi*, Th. III, No.1-2 (1980) 55-70.

[45] Nagarakertāgama (NK), 44,1 (translations quoted from T.G.T. Pigeaud, *Java in the 14th Century*, The Hague 1960, Vol. 3).

[46] Jayakatwang's origin and his relation with the Singhasāri dynasty are still unclear. According to the newly-discovered copper-plates of Mūla-Malurun, Jayakatwang was a nephew of Kertanagara. But "according to the Kidu Harṣa Wijaya Jayakatye is a great-grandson of Kṛtajaya, the last king of Kadiri who was defeated by Ken Angrok or Śrī Rājasa. That is why his chief minister (*patih*) instigated him to attack Kṛtanagara of Singhasāri, great-grandson of Ken Angrok, to revenge his great-grandfather's murder (H.W., II, 17-19;35)", Boechari, op.cit. (1980), p.62.

was in no way smooth sailing. During its first decades Majapahit faced a number of serious revolts in exactly those areas which had been annexed. These revolts are a clear indicator of a drastic change in the policy of the central dynasty towards the outer areas which formerly were ruled by highly-respected tributary chiefs or *rājās*.

The *Nagarakertāgama*, composed only a few decades later in the year 1356 A.D., illustrates the success of this new policy of annexation most convincingly. Its first chapter contains a complete and "annotated" list of the *nagaras* ("towns" or capitals of formerly independent chiefs and *rājās*) which meanwhile had been completely annexed by Majapahit. They all seeem to have been ruled by princes and princesses of the Majapahit dynasty. This descrpiton concludes as follows:

> All Illustrious Javanese Kings (*rājā*) and Queens, the honoured ones who equally are distinguished by their towns, each having one for his or her own, in one place, in Wilwa Tikta (Majapahit), they hold in their lap the honoured Prince-Overlord (*narendrādipa*).[47]

In my opinion, this description is a clear indicator of a successful policy of annexation of an imperial kingdom.[48] This annexation was followed by a thorough "dynastification" of the areas of formerly autonomous and even independent chiefs and *rājās* which had once surrounded the nuclear area of an Early Kingdom.

In India and, to some extent, also in Southeast Asia this development is reflected by the semantic change of the word *sāmanta*. The etymological meaning of *sāmanta* is "on all sides" or "bordering". In earlier texts it means particularly "neighbour". In the early political terminology, e.g. in Asoka's inscriptions of the 3rd century B.C., it is equivalent to "(independent) neighbouring ruler". Around 500 A.D., when the early mediaeval kingdoms expanded their areas, its meaning changed to "(defeated) neighbouring ruler" and it became synonymous with "tributary chief" or "tributary *rājā*" (*sāmanta-*

---

[47] *NK*, 6,4.

[48] For a different interpretation see O.W. Wolters, op.cit. (note 7), p.16.

rāja).[49] It was a typical attribute of the Early Kingdoms of mediaeval India to be surrounded by a "circle of tributary chiefs" (*sāmanta-cakra*).[50] Because of their importance at the royal courts, *sāmanta* soon also became a title of high officers and dignitaries at the central dynasty. This semantic change from an independent neighbour to a tributary chief and finally to a high dignitary at the central court thus is an excellent illustration of the structural changes which took place during the above-mentioned process of state formation.

In Java, too, we know several examples of a slow transformation of former independent local *rakai* chiefs to tributary princes of the Early Kingdoms, and finally to high dignitaries at the courts of the Imperial Kingdoms.[51]

The earliest inscription of East Java was issued in the year 760 A.D. by an independent prince, Gajayāna of Kañjuruhaṇ near Singhasāri which was identified by J.G. de Casparis as the Kanuruhan of later inscriptions. A *rakai* of Kanuruhan was still acting independently in his territory in the year 881 A.D., but in the year 915 King Dakṣa issued an inscription "in favour" (*anugraha*) of the *rakai* of Kanuruhan. In the meantime, Kanuruhan had obviously been incorporated into the kingdom of Dakṣa. In later centuries the *rakai* of Kanuruhan became the highest functionary of the central government as "chancellor".[52] A similar development might have taken place in the case of other high dignitaries of the

---

49 See L.L. Gopal, "Sāmanta - Its Varying Significance in Ancient India", in: *JRAS*, 1963, pp.21-37.

50 In his Canggal inscription of the year 732 A.D. Sañjaya also claims to have "overthrown many circles of sāmantas", sl.11 (H.B. Sarkar, *Corpus of the Inscriptions of Java*, Calcutta 1971, Vol. I, p.18).

51 Boechari, *Some Considerations of the Problem of the Shift of Mataram's Center of Government from Central to East Java in the 10th Century A.D.* (*Bulletin of Research Centre of Archaeology of Indonesia*, No. 10) 1976.

52 F.H. van Naerssen, op.cit. (note 14), p.53 ff.

Javanese kingdom, e.g. the three *rakais* Hino, Halu and Sirikan.[53] Although their incorporation into the central government took place in the transition period of the Early to the Imperial Kingdoms, the change of their function within the political system is symptomatic of a development which culminated in the period of Imperial Kingdoms. The process began with their subordination as tributary rulers and it was followed by their integration and incorporation into the central government. This in turn finally led to their "deterritorialization", their displacement from their former territories, which were then taken over by members of the central dynasties or officers of the court. This process increased slowly the number and importance of the "patrimonial staff" of the central dynasties at the cost of the autonomous local leadership.

VI

Undoubtedly, the State of Angkor was most advanced in the double process of transforming former autonomous local or regional centres into provinces (*viṣaya*) and in building up a centralized bureaucracy. As is well known, Chou Ta-kuan mentioned at the end of the 13th ccentury that Cambodia was divided into about 90 provinces, each province having a fortified citadel, governed by a mandarin. But Wolters pointed out that the number of the twenty-three images of Jayabuddhamahānātha, which Jayavarman VII had distributed throughout his empire, is more likely to reflect "the number of substantial territorial units in the kingdom at that time, which included some in the Menam basin".[54] An article by S. Sahai contains a list of eighteen *pramāns* or *viṣayas* out of which ten "could be traced back to the pre-Angkorian period when they functioned as more or less independent principalities rather than actual units of provincial administration".[55]

---

[53] Boechari, "Rakryān Mahāmantri i Hino. A Study on the Highest Court Dignitary of Ancient Java up to the 13th Century A.D.", in: *Beberapa karya dalam ilmu-ilmu sastra* (Fakultas Sastra Universitas Indonesia, 1975-1976), pp. 61-111.

[54] O.W. Wolters, op.cit. (note 12), p.369, note 102.

[55] S. Sahai, "Territorial Administration in Ancient Cambodia", in: *The South East Asian Review*, 2 (1977) pp.35-50, (38).

Out of those which are mentioned only in Angkorian times as new provinces, Lavo or Lopburi in Central Thailand forms an interesting example of a very quick transformation of a conquered, formerly independent principality into a province of an imperial kingdom. Till the early years of the 11th century Lavo was an independent kingdom. It was conquered by Sūryavarman I when he was still struggling for the uncontested rule of Angkor. But already in the year 1011 a *tamrvac* from the *pramān* Lavo was mentioned among this cadre of high officers who took the famous oath of allegiance to Sūryavarman. His village (*sruk*) was also situated in the *pramān* of Lavo. The question whether we may infer from this fact that this *tamrvac* originally belonged to the local elite of Lavo or whether he was posted there from outside, is difficult to decide.[56]

"Provincialization" of neighbouring principalities and early kingdoms through the expansionism of imperial kingdoms, however, usually did not erase the socio-political identity of these annexed areas. During the early years of the Mahīdharapura dynasty when Sūryavarman II perhaps had not yet been able to establish his authority in the outlying districts, Lavo sent on its own a mission to China in the year 1115 and again in 1155, after the death of the great Sūryavarman. Lavo might even have become completely independent during the following decade. But Lavo was again certainly a province when a son of Jayavarman VII became the Lord (*iśa*) of Lavo and when Jayavarman sent one of the Jayabuddhamahānātha images there.[57]

Malyang is another example which shows that even a former principality which was near the imperial capital does not lose its identity, even after several centuries of "provincialization". In the year 893 it was mentioned as a *pramān* and again in 1145 as a *viṣaya* of the Angkorian State. But during the chaotic years which followed the devastation of Angkor by the Cams in the year 1177, Malyang revolted against Jayavarman VII. Thus even strong imperial kingdoms like Angkor had to face revolts and wars within their own provinces. But unlike the period of the early kingdoms

[56] *IC*, III, p.210, La formule du serment, A16.

[57] *IC*, II, p.176, Grande Stèle du Phimanakas, St. LVII.

they were the exception and not the rule. Therefore we should be careful not to overstress the aspect of "multiplicity of centres" in the case of these Imperial Kingdoms. Otherwise the structure of the German medieval empire, for instance even under emperor Frederic Barbarossa, has also to be reconsidered and certainly that of the contemporary French and English kingdoms, too.

The case of Angkor reveals yet another aspect of change which had already begun in the period of the Early Kingdoms and which led to a substantial change in the internal development of the Imperial Kingdoms. Anthropologists agree that fission, the breaking away of one part of a social group or polity, was a major feature of chieftaincies. This fissiparous tendency still existed in the Early Kingdoms. When a tributary chief became strong enough he declared his independence and established within his own nuclear area a new polity. In course of time, it might have become the core of a new Early Kingdom. Its new *rājā* certainly tried to defeat his meanwhile weakened overlord who in turn thus fell back to the position of a tributary chief of his erstwhile "vassal". During the period of the Early Kingdoms dynastic change usually also meant a displacement of the nuclear area of the former Early Kingdom by the nuclear area of the new dynasty, which became the core of the new kingdom. This political pattern of the Early Kingdoms, which was still characterized by a tendency of fission and fusion, by the rise and fall of local and regional dynastic centres with their overlapping circles or spheres of influence and their changing loyalties, is appropriately described by the *maṇḍala* concept. But from a certain stage of development onwards, the fissiparous or centrifugal tendencies were outbalanced by, and finally given up in favour of, centripetal efforts. Jayavarman II's foundation of the Angkorian kingdom was as much based on this changing attitude as his success contributed to the change. "Local independence was no longer the acceptable objection as it had been in the eighth century. The integrity of the Angkorian kingdom was no longer in question."[58]

In this new situation the aim of ambitous governors in outlying provinces or autonomous tributary chiefs was no longer separatism

---

[58] O.W. Wolters, op.cit. (note 40), p.30.

but rather to gain a stronger and higher position at the centre, or to launch, in case of its weakness, a *coup d' état*. Sūryavarman I's aim was not to defeat or to destroy the Angkorian kingdom in order to build up a new great kingdom. On the contrary, he fought for years to conquer the already firmly-established centre and to become its uncontested ruler, and it was Sūryavarman who became the true founder of Imperial Angkor.[59] Again, a century later, the Mahīdharapura dynasty, which had its origin most probably in the north of Angkor, did not fight for its own independence. But it began a struggle for the conquest of Angkor which lasted for several decades. It was finally won by Sūryavarma II who then became one of Angkor's greatest imperial rulers. Had he acted during the second stage of the Early Kingdoms, he might have constructed Angkor Wat in his own nuclear area in order to demonstrate his own greatness vis-à-vis the defeated dynasty of the centre.[60] It needs no further explanation that this new centripetal force contributed a lot to the relatively high stability of the extended core areas of the Imperial Kingdoms.

Such problems as, for instance, the extension of the patrimonial staff, the provincialization of formerly autonomous tributary states, or the centripetal ambitions of the leaders of outlying provinces, show that anthropological models lose much of their relevance for a structural analysis of the Imperial Kingdoms. And, as already mentioned, even the *maṇḍala* concept as described by O.W. Wolters does not give sufficient scope to the structural changes which constitute the difference between the Early and the Imperial Kingdoms.

---

[59] M. Vickery rejects G. Coedès story of Sūryavarman I's alleged origin from the Malayan Peninsula and instead traces back his origin to an old aristocratic family of Angkor. (M. Vickery, "The Reign of Sūryavarman I and the Dynamics of Angkorean Development", unpublished paper, Eighth Conference of the International Association of Historians of Asia, Kuala Lumpur 1980.) His paper is important in another context, too, as he noticed a "rapid bureaucratic expansion" in Angkor in the 10th century which thus preceded Angkor's final "imperial breakthrough" in the 11th century.

[60] At exactly the same time a very similar event took place in eastern India when Anantavarman Coḍagaṅga of southern Kaliṅga conquered Central Orissa in c.1112 A.D. He shifted his own capital to Central Orissa and constructed there, too, the greatest temple of his enlarged empire, i.e. the Jagannātha temple at Puri.

VII

Another major problem of transition from the Early Kingdoms to the Imperial Kingdoms is whether or not the latter were able to establish a firm hold over the local administration of the enlarged core area and to increase their legitimate access to the local resources. It is known that the "conventional school" of historians anwers this question in the affirmative. These historians argue on the basis of the existing lists of a hierarchy of officers which allegedly linked the court directly and indirectly with the provinces, districts and even villages. But on the basis of his intensive studies, B. Stein came to a very different interpretation, even in the case of the administration of the Cōḷa empire which usually is accepted to have been one of the most centrally-administered states of its age throughout India and Southeast Asia. "In this political order resources did not flow from the subordinate to the central domain by command of the latter. In fact, there are no reliable data on resource transfers of a political nature - cash or kind - at all".[61]

A systematic analysis of the rather meagre epigraphical evidence most probably will show that this inference holds good for most or even all Early States in the whole region. It seems as if the court and its officers in all these States lived mainly from their own landed property and from benefices with a usufruct which might have been limited in time or heredity. This decentralized system of extracting socially-produced surpluses existed already in the nuclear areas of the Early Kingdoms. But the major difference between the Early and the Imperial Kingdoms in this regard was the fact that the imperial court was able to extend this system to the annexed provinces of the enlarged core area.[62] According to the growth of this core area and the centre's power of disposal, the number of courtiers and officers grew without changing the decentralized system as such. But the mere increase in the number

---

[61] B. Stein, op.cit. (note 19), p. 45.

[62] J.G. de Casparis, "Pour une histoire sociale de l'ancienne Java principalement au Xème s.", in: *Archipel*, 21 (1981) pp.125-51; J. Wisseman Christie, "Rāja and Rāma: The Classical State in Early Java", in: *Centers, Symbols, and Hierarchies: Essays on the Classical States of Southeast Asia*, ed. by L. Gesick (Monograph Series No. 26, Yale University, Southeast Asia Studies), New Haven 1983, pp.9-44.

of courtiers who obtained a living from "their" villages in the countryside increased - directly or indirectly - the impact of the centre on its hinterland. There might indeed have been only little "resource transfers of a political nature" from the more distant places of the core area to the centre. The new element, however, consisted of the dense network of mutual dependency which linked the centre and its enlargd core area in a hitherto unknown degree. Whereas the court of the Early Kingdom depended mainly on the resources of its direct hinterland, the whole enlarged core area of the Imperial Kingdom was linked to the centre by a system of decentralized collection of duties and their redistribution. In his paper on "Kingship, the Saṅgha and Society in Pagan"[63] Michael Aung Thwin has very convincingly shown how the three irrigated *kharuin* rice belts of the core area of Pagan, with their decentralized local administration, were linked with the court at Pagan through an elaborate system of redistributive economy.

VIII

Finally, another distinct feature of the Imperial Kingdoms should be mentioned: the new "ritual policy" and ideology of the imperial rulers. Religions, whether autochthonous cults, Hinduism or Buddhism, have always been an integral part of kingship and statecraft in India and Southeast Asia. The importance of the personal belief of the rulers and their priests and their magical capability is known to us from the earliest inscriptional and literary evidence. And on special occasions there were always grand ceremonies, for example, seasonal festivities, potlatch-like "Verdienstfeste" or Vedic rituals. Yet in the context of statecraft, religion remained a private affair of the ruler and his court rather than a public or political affair. This role of religion and rituals, however, changed considerably in Southeast Asia during the last centuries of the first millennium A.D., and it changed even more drastically throughout the following centuries, during the time of the Imperial Kingdoms when religion, or better, religious policy, became a major and permanent aspect of kingship.

---

[63] M. Aung Thwin, "Kingship, the Saṅgha, and Society in Pagan", in: K.R. Hall and J.K. Whitmore (eds.), op.cit. (note 39), pp.205-56.

This change is perhaps most obvious with regard to the topography of the temples. Since their first appearance in Southeast Asia there have always been temples at the political centres or capitals of the Early Kingdoms. But it seems that initially temples of major importance, both from the religious and political point of view, were more often constructed at particular holy places - for example on the top of a mountain or on its slope (e.g. Vat Ph'u and Mahendraparvata in Cambodia or Canggal, Dieng, Borobudur and Gunung Penangungan in Java). But from a certain period onwards temples were constructed to an increasing extent near or at the political centres. Accordingly they became more and more the focal point of a magico-politial "force field" emanating from the political centre of the kingdom. Krom had earlier suggested that the temple complex of the Lara Djonggrang at Prambanam depicted a replica of the whole state, the central sanctuary representing the royal court, and the different temple buildings around the sanctuary the various parts of the kingdom.[64] Later, in his detailed study of the inscriptions of Tjandi Plaosan-Lor, J.G. de Casparis was able to go even one step further. He proved that the donative inscriptions on the surrounding 174 small shrines belonged to the royal family and "higher dignitaries from all over the kingdom, so that the temple complex as a whole would more or less reflect the relations within the kingdom. [And] there may be some indications that the place in the complex occupied by their buildings corresponds to the situation of territories with which they are associated".[65] Thus, already in the transitional period between the Early and the Imperial Kingdoms the central temples had become a magical instrument[66] of obviously the greatest importance under the direct control of the king and his priests. This function of the temple, which never existed in this explicit form in India, found its clearest expression in the royal temple pyramids of Angkor and culminated

---

[64] N.J. Krom, *Inleiding tot de Hindoe-Javaansche Kunst*, 2nd ed., 1923, Vol. II, p. 453.

[65] J.G. de Casparis, *Short Inscriptions from Tjaṇḍi Plaosan-Lor*, Djakarta 1958, p.31 (*Bulletin of the Archaeological Service of the Republic of Indonesia*, No. 4).

[66] J. Filliozat, "Le symbolisme du monument du Phnoṃ Bakheṅ", in: *BEFEO*, 54 (1954) 527-54.

in the Bayon of Jayavarman VII. How else can one interpret the fact that the Jayavarman sent twenty-three sculptures of Jayabuddha, showing the king himself in an idealized form as the "Great Protector" (*mahānātha*) Buddha, while at the same time these provinces had to send substitutes of their own provincial deities to the capital where they were enshrined in the Bayon. This was embellished with fifty-four towers, each of which showed four faces of the deified king.

To the same extent that these new royal temples became the magico-political centre of the empire and the cosmos, the imperial kings themselves became directly associated with the divine power of these centres. Hindu kingship has always been regarded as a divine institution and Hindu kings were compared with gods. But it was only during the relatively later time which coincided with the period of the Imperial Kingdoms that even living kings "as rulers of the earth" became the representatives and part (*aṃśa*) of the divine cosmic ruler or Devarāja. On the top of the temple pyramids of Angkor the divine Devarāja (= Śiva) and the "subtle innerself" (*sūkṣmāntarātman*) of his earthly representative met and merged in the divine *liṅgam* which bore a name combining god and king.[67] In a few cases, imperial kings might even have tried to become deified during their actual lifetime. A well-known, though still dubious, example is King Kertanagara's inscription of the year 1289 A.D. on an image of the Buddhist deity Mahākṣobhya. In this inscription he seems to have claimed that he was consecrated "in the form of Mahākṣobhya".[68]

This apotheosis of the imperial kings certainly may also be explained in religious terms. The tremendous increase in their power and the new symbols of divine kingship which surrounded them must have raised their status accordingly in the eyes of the people. But this religious change of the role of kingship implies or reflects a political change, too. An imperial king was no longer only a founder of a glorious dynasty and a destroyer of the surrounding *samānta-cakra*, as for instance Sañjaya of Central Java

---

[67] See below chapter 16.

[68] The Mahākṣobhya image inscription of the year 1289; see B.R. Chatterji, op.cit., p.186.

is praised in his inscription of the year 732. The imperial king unified the hitherto fragmented and chaotic world under one umbrella (*eka chattra*) and became a universal *cakravartin*. This imperial ideology of a cosmic responsibility for the whole realm finds very clear expression in the famous Sdok Kak Thoṃ inscription of the year 1052, referring to the foundation of imperial Kambuja in the year 802. Jayavarman II invited the Brahmin Hiraṇyadāma who was well-versed in magical science (*siddhi vidyā*) "to conduct a ceremony which should prevent this land Kambuja from ever being dependent on Javā, and to bring about [instead] that there should be only one single 'Lord of the lower earth' [= king; Khmer: *kamrateṅ phdai karom*], who would be Cakravartin. This brahman [...] consecrated the 'Lord of the World', who is King [*kamrateṅ jagat ta rāja* = Skt.: *Devarāja*]".[69]

In Java, Kertanagara's rule marks the beginning of the imperial phase of the Javanese kingdom. The Sarwadharma inscription of the year 1269 describes Kertanagara as the "Illustrious Great King, being considered as the one sunshade (*eka chātra*) over all Java-land, causing the unification of the lands of Janggala and Pangjalu to return".[70] And it was "because of his unification of the domain" (*kṣityekībhāva-karaṇāt*)[71] that twenty years later he claimed the divine status of a Mahākṣobhya.

IX

It is not only this new imperial ideology which matters in the context of this paper. Of even greater relevance are its structural consequences. On the basis of this new ideology and, at the same time, in order to strengthen the imperial unity and their own position, the imperial kings covered their extended core areas with a close network of religious institutions which focussed directly on the capital and its religious institutions and thus, at least indirectly,

---

[69] Sdok Kak Thoṃ inscription, C, 71-4; see below chapter 16.

[70] Sarwadharma inscription, plate 6, recto, lines 4ff; see G.T. Pigeaud, op.cit. (note 45), p.149.

[71] The Mahākṣobhya image inscription, see note 68.

on the imperial king himself. This system, linking local, provincial and a few major temples at the capital with the imperial temple of the ruling king, was perhaps most highly developed in Angkor under Jayavarman VII.[72] The economic ties which linked these temples might even partly have substituted for the "resource transfer of a political nature". And, furthermore, in the case of Angkor we have reliable and detailed data on the extent to which the large temples, which remained under direct control of the central court, influenced directly the economic development of the core area of Angkor. The core area and the provinces were linked through imperial roads. Along these roads the imperial kings constructed rest houses for pilgrims, traders, and officers, and at nodal points of this infrastructure temples functioned as royal rest houses and temporary imperial palaces. At the end of the 12th century the extended core area of Angkor might have been covered by about 3000-3500 temples, all fulfilling important ritual, economic and administrative functions.

Under the imperial kings of Majapahit the extended core area of East Java was also covered with a network of temples. These temples were certainly not as monumental as the temples of the earlier kings of Central Java or Angkor. But the intrinsic feature of the "ritual network" in East Java was perhaps even more explicit. Inscriptions and the *Nagarakertagāma* leave no doubt that these temples were directly linked to the imperial policy of unification of the extended core area. In the already mentioned Sarwadharma inscription, King Kertanagara reconfirmed the special privileges granted to the religious domains (*dharma*) by his father Viṣṇuvardhana. These concessions were granted in order to separate "the dominions and dependencies of the honoured holy domains of the clergy of all kinds from the lands of the Royal servants, with the intention of the independence (*swatantra*) of the honoured holy domains of the clergy of all kinds, in order to render the more firm the Illustrious Great King's sitting on the jewel lion's throne, being

[72] I.W. Mabbett, "Kingship in Angkor", in: *Journal of the Siam Society,* 66,2 (1978) pp.1-58; Leonid A. Sedow, "Angkor: Society and State", in: *The Early State* ed. by H.J.M. Claessen and P. Skalnik, The Hague 1978, pp.111-30; M.C. Ricklefs, "Land and the Law in Epigraphy of Tenth-Century Cambodia", in: *Journal of Asian Studies,* 26 (1967) pp.411-20.

considered as the one sunshade (*eka chātra*) of all Javaland, as the exalted deity (*uttungga dewa*) among all the honoured Prabhus (*samantaprabhu*) of the land of Janggala and Pangjalu".[73] Here we have in a nutshell the essence of the imperial ritual policy, i.e. to unite the extended core area and to strengthen the position of the ruler. This conclusion is reconfirmed by the *Nagarakertāgama* composed about a century later. In connection with the *Śraddha* ceremonies performed for the queen Rājapatnī at her funeral temple at Bayalangu, it is stated: "The reason for it to be fashioned as an eminent religious domain (*dharma*), that as one country it would be known in the world in future, not going to deviate. It was to be a token af the Illustrious Prince's being a vanquisher of all countries on the earth, being a universe-swaying Prabhu (*cakra-wartti prabhū*)".[74] And the chapter of the *Nagarakertāgama* concludes: The deceased Queen "is being offered worship (*pūjā*) by well-born people (*amatya*), the villages (*grāma*), all of them are submissive (*bhakti*). She enjoys her heaven, having a grandson paramount in Yawaland, a [sole] monarch (*ekha nātha*)".[75] The ideological function of this grand ceremony in which the whole court of Majapahit participated is quite evident: to keep the land united and the villages submissive and to ensure that Java is ruled only by one universal ruler.

But again, it is not only this imperial ideology which matters here. It is the network of royal temples covering the extended imperial core area of Majapahit which is relevant for our present deliberations. The *Nagarakertāgama* mentions that in the year 1365 A.D. there existed twenty-seven royal religious domains (*dharma haji*).[76] All these temples and their dependencies were under the guardianship of abbots (*sthāpaka*) and under the control of royal priests (*wiku-rājas*). And it is of the greatest interest that, at least according to my knowledge, all these royal domains and their

---

[73] Sarwadharma inscription, plate 3, lines 4 ff, see Pigeaud, op.cit. (note 45), p.145.

[74] *NK*, 68,5.

[75] *NK*, 69,3.

[76] *NK*, 74,2.

temples were established during the "imperial" century of Javanese history from the middle of the 13th century to the year 1365 A.D. when the *Nagarakertāgama* was written by Prapañca. None of the earlier temples (e.g. Sanggariti or Badut) seem to have been included in the system of these royal domains.[77] These royal domains, therefore, obviously formed an integral part of the policy of the imperial kings of this period.

X

The system of royal domains in Java and of the hierarchical order of temples in Angkor and monastic institutions in Burma provided the imperial kings and their courts with an additional infrastructure which did not exist in the Early Kingdoms. Further research is certainly required to come to some final conclusions in these matters. But even now we may come to the tentative inference that this new infrastructure had an impact on the structure of the Imperial Kingdoms of Southeast Asia, too. It allowed the imperial courts, perhaps for the first time, a permanent and in some cases even direct access to the sphere of local matters even outside the limited nuclear area which was under their direct political control. Together with other spheres and mechanisms of integration, some of which have not been mentioned in this paper (e.g. art and architecture, literature or trade),[78] this ritual policy played an important role in a continuous process of interlocal or intraregional integration. This process of integration and structural change which radiated from the courts to the extended core areas was perhaps the most important change which took place during the short period of Imperial Kingdoms in Southeast Asia. In most cases

---

[77] Not all of the 27 dharmas, however, have yet been identified.

[78] J. Wisseman, "Markets and Trade in Pre-Majapahit Java", in: *Economic Exchange and Social Interaction in Southeast Asia*, ed. by K.L. Hutterer, Michigan 1977, pp.197-212; K.R. Hall, "Khmer Commercial Development and Foreign Contacts under Sūryavarman I", in: *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 18,3 (1975); A. Thomas Kirsch, "Kingship, Genealogical Claims, and Societal Integration in Ancient Khmer Society: An Interpretation", in C.D. Cowan and O.W. Wolters, op.cit. (note 13), pp.190-202; I.W. Mabbett, "Varṇas in Angkor and the Indian Caste System", in: *Journal of Asian Studies*, 36 (1977).

the political framework of these core areas of integration was shattered in the following centuries. But the socio-cultural heritage of these extended core areas of the former Imperial Kingdoms again played a most important role in a more recent political process which scholars of political science refer to as a "nation-building process".

EPIGRAPHICAL REFERENCES TO THE "CITY" AND THE "STATE" IN EARLY INDONESIA

I.

As explained elsewhere in a more theoretical context, state formation in Southeast Asia took place in three consecutive phases, which correspond with chiefdom (or local principality), the early kingdom, and finally the emperial kingdom.[1] The present article organizes and analyzes the epigraphical references to the "city" and the "state" according to these three developmental phases. Part I deals with Indonesia's earliest inscriptions of Mūlavarman and Pūrṇavarman of the fifth century C.E., which depict the transformation of a chiefdom into an early kingdom. Parts II to IV analyze various developmental stages and structural problems of early kingdoms as exemplified by the inscriptions of early Srīvijaya and of central and eastern Java from the late seventh to twelfth centuries. The final part deals with the growth of the imperial kingdom under Singasari and Majapahit. The emphasis of the

---

This study was undertaken at the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore, with a Southeast Asia Fellowship for German Scholars of the Stiftung Volkswagenwerk. I am grateful to both institutions for providing me their unfailing hospitality and financial support from March to September 1987. Furthermore I wish to express my thanks to Prof. J.G. de Casparis, Prof. Boechari, Dr. J. Wisseman-Christie, Dr. P.-Y. Manguin, and Dr. J. Miksic for their help and comments.

[1] See chapter 14, also H. Kulke, "Indian Colonies, Indianization or Cultural Convergence? Reflections on the Changing Image of India's Role in South-East Asia", in: *Onderzoek in Zuidoost-Azië. Agenda's voor de Jaren Negentig, ed. H. Schulte Nordholt (= Semaian, 3), Rijksuniversiteit te Leiden 1990, pp. 8-32.*

paper is the descriptive analysis of the epigraphical evidence rather than an evaluation of its theoretical implications.[2]

The first step towards state formation that is discernible in inscriptions is the transition from chieftaincy to early kingdom. In Indonesia this transition is illustrated very instructively by the famous Kutei inscriptions of Mūlavarman who ruled about 400 C.E. in East Kalimantan.[3] These earliest inscriptions of Indonesia, incised on seven yupa or sacrificial stone posts that bear a strong resemblance to menhirs, contain the unique story of the rise of a local chieftaincy and its transformation into an early kingdom within three generations.[4] The story begins with a local leader, perhaps a lineage elder, with the name Kuṇḍuṅga. His Sanskrit title "Lord of Men" (*narendra*) may have been conferred upon him only posthumously by his son or grandson. Under his son something important apparently took place, as one of the inscriptions reports that he became the founder of a lineage or "dynasty" (*vaṃśa-karta*) and assumed the Sanskrit name Aśvavarman. Whatever that may have meant in detail, it appears that Aśvavarman was able to raise considerably the status of his lineage (*vaṃśa*) within his own clan.

---

[2] For further theoretical discussions, see D. Lombard, "Le concept d'empire en Asie du Sud-Est", in: *Le Concept d'Empire*, ed. M. Duverger (Paris 1980), pp. 433-41; see O.W. Wolters, *History, Culture, and Region in Southeast Asian Perspectives (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1982); L. Gessick, ed., Centers, Symbols and Hierarchies: Essays on the Classical States of Southeast Asia* (New Haven: Yale University Southeast Asian Studies Monographs, 1983); P. Wheatley, *Nagara and Commandery: Origins of Southeast Asian Urban Traditions* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Department of Geography Research Paper Nos. 207-208, 1983); K.R. Hall, *Maritime Trade and State Development in Early Southeast Asia* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1985); Marr and Milner, eds., *Southeast Asia*; S. Subrahmanyam, "Aspects of State Formation in South India and Southeast Asia, 1550-1650, in: *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 23 (1986): 358ff; for Mainland Southeast Asia see C. Higham, *The Archaeology of Mainland Southeast Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); R. Hagensteijn, *Circles of Kings. Political Dynamics in Early Continental Southeast Asia* (Dordrect, 1989).

[3] B.Ch. Chhabra, *Expansion of Indo-Aryan Culture During Pallava Rule* (New Delhi 1965) pp. 85-92.

[4] See also F.H. van Naerssen, *The Economic and Administrative History of Early Indonesia* (Leiden/Köln 1977), pp. 18-23.

The decisive steps towards the establishment of an early kingdom took place in the third generation under Mūlavarman. He assumed the royal title *rājā*, defeated neighboring chiefs (*pārthiva*), and made them his tributaries (*karadā*). Furthermore, he invited Brahmins "who came hither" (*ihāgata*) and celebrated grand rituals at a "most sacred place" (*puṇyatama kṣetra*) called Vaprakeśvara, and had a series of impressive inscriptions incised.[5] The meaning of the unusual name of "Lord (Śiva) of the Vapra(ka)" is unclear. But the fact that the place is ecplicitly described as "most sacred" allows us to infer that it had something to do with Mūlavarman's rise to power. Sanskrit *vapra* has the meaning of either "rampart" and "earth raised as the foundation of a building" or "mound" and "hillock". Thus this "Lord of the Vapra(ka)" may have been associated either with the foundation of Mūlavarman's own "town" (*pura*), which is mentioned in one of the inscriptions, or with a ritual on a hillock. Although the first meaning cannot be ruled out, the latter is more likely in view of other examples known from Southeast Asia where liṅgas of Śiva (*isvara*) were consecrated on a hillock (*vapra*) in connection with the foundation ritual of a polity. The most famous example is, of course, the establishment of a Śivaliṅga as Devarāja on the Mahendra mountain in 802 C.E. by Jayavarman II, the founder of the kingdom of Angkor.[6] More important in the context of early Javanese history, however, is the consecration of a Śivaliṅga by Sañjaya on a hillock in central Java in 732 C.E.[7] In regard to Mūlavarman's Vaprakeśvara, we may even go a step further and infer that the deity Vaprakeśvara may have also been associated with the cult of a deified ancestor, the very "root" of the "dynasty" established by Mūlavarman's father. At least Mūlavarman's name, "protegé (*varman*) of the root (*mūla*)", makes such an inference quite likely. Finally, it should be emphasized that the making and establishment of the monumental *yūpa* stone

---

[5] See also J.G. de Casparis, "Some Notes on the Oldest Inscriptions of Indonesia", in: *A Man of Indonesian Letters. Essays in Honour of Professor A. Teeuw*, ed. C.M.S. Hellwig and S.O. Robson (Leiden 1986), pp. 242-55 (= VKI, 121).

[6] See chapter 16.

[7] H.B. Sarkar, *Corpus of Inscriptions of Java*, vol. I (Calcutta: Mukhopadhyay, 1971), pp. 15-24.

inscription by the Brahmins (their authorship is mentioned twice in the inscriptions) in a tribal surrounding must have been particularly impressive and successful in raising the status of Mūlavarman. The Brahmins "who had come hither" were generously rewarded by Mūlavarman with land (*bhūmi*) and thousands of cows.

The analysis of the epigraphical evidence of these earliest inscriptions of Indonesia allows us to draw the following tentative picture of Mūlavarman's new polity. At its center was the *pura*, which, however, certainly did not yet represent a truly urban settlement. The statement that it was "his own (*svaka*) pura" makes it more likely that, as in later cases, here, too, *pura* meant the "residence" or kraton of Mūlavarman. Not very far away from the *pura* was the "most sacred place" (perhaps on the "sacred mountain") of Mūlavarman's polity, which might have been associated with a Hinduized ancestor cult. The *pura* may have been surrounded by the dwelling places and lands of the Brahmins "who came here" and by the places of other members of Mūlavarman's lineage (*vaṃśa*). Beyond this nuclear area and its adjoining jungle, similar, though most likely smaller, places of other "landlords" (*pārthiva*) and lineage elders and their family members were situated. Some of these little chiefs had been defeated by Mūlavarman and thus become his tributaries. This is all we know about Mūlavarman's polity from his inscription. Apart from the *pura*, the holy *kṣetra*, the land (*bhūmi*) donated to the Brahmins, and the surrounding "landlords" (*pārthiva*) donated to the Brahmins, no other evidence is known that allows us to define the polity spatially. Furthermore, it is significant that no "officers" of any political function are mentioned in these inscriptions. In Weberian terminology, Mūlavarman's authority was thus a purely patriarchal rule based, most likely, on his patriarchal household and its *oikos* economy. But there was one significant difference. Mūlavarman's court was able to attract Brahmins who certainly acted not only as ritual specialists but also as advisers, thus fulfilling a role that comes already near to Weber's extra-patrimonial staff. The fact that Mūlavarman managed to invite (and feed!) Brahmins and to have them perform grand rituals and to compose and incise seven impressive yūpa inscriptions distinguishes Mūlavarman's polity from the many little chieftaincies that surrounded him. However, although he claimed to have defeated them, he still remained one of them, though as

primus inter pares; whereas these chiefs were called "Landlord" (*pārthiva*), Rājā Mūlavarman was praised in his inscriptions as the "Lord of the Landlords" (*pārthiva-indra*).

In this connection a small hint from the earliest inscription of mainland Southeast Asia, the famous Vo-Chanh inscription from central Vietnam, is very instructive.[8] It reports an announcement "beneficial to the people" (*prajā*) by King Śrī Māra that he was willing to share all his property with those dear to him. Among these were his sons, brothers, and relatives explicitly mentioned as having been satisfied by Śrī Māra while he sat on the throne in the midst of his kinsmen (*svajana*). Much has been written about this inscription. On palaeographical grounds, its date is usually given as the second or third centuries C.E. G. Coedès and others assumed an identity of Śrī Māra with Fan Shih-man, the great king of Funan in the third century C.E.[9] But to my understanding it is absolutely impossible to interpret this inscription as a document of a great Funanese king who, in this case, would have been ruling over a large kingdom that spread from Funan's center in the Mekong Delta up the Annamite coast where the Vo-Canh inscription was found. Instead, the Vo-Canh inscription appears to represent a "state" that has to be equated evolutionarily with Mūlavarman's polity. In the Vo-Canh inscription we meet only the king, his relatives, and the people. He sat amidst his own kinsmen and promised to share his property with them. As in the case of Mūlavarman's inscription, there were no officers of any kind present during the ceremony. Some Brahmins must have been around to compose and to incise the inscription, but they seem to have been even less influential than under Mūlavarman as they are not referred to at all. Śrī Māra's "state affairs" were therefore clearly the affairs of the "royal family" (*rājakula*) which is mentioned in the inscription.

There is yet another fact that brings the Vo-Canh inscription typologically even nearer to the Kutei inscriptions. In its (otherwise very mutilated) introduction, the Vo-Canh inscription, too,

---

[8] R.C. Majumdar, *The Inscriptions of Champa* (Lahore 1927), pp. 1-3.

[9] G. Coedès, *The Indianized States of Southeast Asia* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1968), p. 40.

mentions a "first conquest" (*prathama vijaya*). As in the case of Mūlavarman in Kalimantan, Śrī Māra's family (*kula*) or clan obviously had just undertaken some successful raids against neighboring chiefs. In order to ascertain the loyalty of his (envious?) relatives (in this regard the explicit mention of his brothers is noteworthy), Śrī Māra felt obliged to assure them of his willingness to share the spoils, and he appealed to future kings to do the same. From a structural point of view, we have thus the same situation as we came across in Eastern Kalimantan after Mūlavarman had undertaken his first conquests. In this regard it is important that D.C. Sircar, the renowned Indian epigraphist, stated that "the date (of the Vo-Canh inscription) is not much earlier than the 5th century A.D."[10] Śrī Māra thus would have been a contemporary of Mūlavarman, facing obviously quite similar problems while extending his authority beyond his own family or clan territory.

Pūrṇavarmanś nearly contemporary inscriptions of mid-fifth century west Java depict a picture of a slightly more developed early statehood.[11] Pūrṇavarman is praised as the "Lord (*īśvara*) of the city (*nagara*) of Tārumā" whose predecessor Pīnabāhu already bore the truly royal title "Foremost King of Kings" (*rājādhirājā*). Whereas Pīnabāhu had dug a canal passing beside the "famous city" (*purī*), Pūrṇavarman dug another canal that cut across the "cantonment" (*śibira*) of his grandfather, who might have been identical with Pīnabāhu. In any case, here, too, three generations are mentioned, although in this case already the grandfather seems to have been able to impose his authority upon other chiefs. Pūrṇavarman continued this policy as he is explicitly praised as conquerer of the "towns of his enemies" (*arinagara*). In this connection, too, it is interesting to note that Pūrṇavarman, in spite of his conquest, remained a primus inter pares, ruling over his own *nagara* as did his enemies (*ari*) in their own *nagara*. As in the case of Mūlavarman's (and Śrī Māra's) inscriptions, we find no mention of officers or any references pertaining to the spatial aspect of his

10 D.C. Sircar, *Select Inscriptions*, vol. I (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1965), p. 54, note 1.

11 Chhabra, *Expansion*, pp. 93-97.

authority. Therefore we have no idea about the character of Pūrṇavarman's relations with the "cities" (*nagara*) of the enemies that he claims to have conquered. There was, however, a remarkable difference between these early kings. Pūrṇavarman's association with the Hindu deities Viṣṇu and Indra[12] clearly indicates that his court has already come under much stronger Indian influence, perhaps over several generations, than those of Mūlavarman and Śrī Māra. But in Java, too, this influence had not yet fundamentally changed the nature of the state of Tārumānagara.

However, one aspect of the epigraphical evidence of Pūrṇavarman's inscription deserves our attention. Whereas Mūlavarman's inscription mentions only once a *pura* (there is no such mention at all in Śrī Māra's inscription), Pūrṇavarman's four inscriptions refer to *nagara, purī*, and *śibira*. The so-called Ci-Arutan inscription clearly praises Pūrṇavarman as the "Lord of Tārumānagara"; the Jambu Rock inscription mentions Tārumā and the defeated *arinagara*; the Kebon-Kopi Rock inscription praises the "Lord of Tārumā" (without mentioning *nagara*); and the Tugu Stone inscription describes the two canals in connection with the "famous *purī*" and the *śibira*.. The meager epigraphical evidence does not allow a clear distinction between these three terms. But we may infer that *śibira*. meant a fortified place, perhaps the kraton of Pūrṇavarman or his grandfather, which was situated within the *purī*. This expression then would refer to Tārumā as a semi-urban or urban-like settlement.

Already at this early time, the third term, *nagara*, might have had a wider connotation, referring to the city and the hinterland controlled by it. The question as to whether the epigraphical evidence allows such a terminological distinction between the kraton, the town, and its politically controlled hinterland will remain a crucial problem throughout this article. One point, however, is worth mentioning in connection with the *nagara* of Pūrṇavarman's inscription. The fact that only the term *nagara*

---

[12] In his Ci-arutan Rock Inscription, a pair of human footprints "which belongs to the illustrious Pūrṇavarman, the Lord of Tārumānagara" are compared with Viṣṇu's footprints, whereas in the Kebon-Kopi Rock Inscription the footprints of his royal elephant are compared with those of Indra's elephant Airavata. (Chhabara, *Expansion*, pp. 93 and 95.)

occurs in connection with Tārumā and the polities of its defeated enemies may be understood as an indication that the spatial concept of the "state" in fifth-century Java was primarily "city"-centered. The earliest epigraphical evidence of Indonesia from the fifth century thus confirms Wheatley's definition of early political units on the Malay peninsula which he derived mainly from Chinese sources: "a polity in which a focally situated settlement exercised direct control over a restricted peripheral territory and exacted whatever tribute it could from an indefinite region beyond."[13]

II.

The next evidence of early urbanism and state formation in Indonesia comes from the most interesting corpus of inscriptions of the early Malay world, i.e. the inscriptions of early Śrīvijaya which can be dated around 682 to 686 C.E. The spatial distribution of the seven major inscriptions indicates an interesting pattern. Three have been found at Śrīvijaya's center around *Palembang*[14] and four were discovered in outer regions (*maṇḍala*)[15] that encircled the center at a distance of several hundered kilometers. Furthermore, some fragmentary inscriptions have come to light in the center.[16] This distribution pattern foreshadows a major problem of Śrīvijaya's statehood, the control of its outer regions. The most

---

[13] Wheatley, *Nagara and Commandery*, p. 233.

[14] P.-Y. Manguin, "Palembang et Srivijaya: anciennes hypotheses, recherches nouvelles", *BEFEO* 76 (1987): 337-402.

[15] From Palembang, the Kedukan Bukit and Talang Tuwo inscriptions were published by G. Coedès, "Les inscriptions malaises de Çrivijaya", *BEFEO* 30 (1930): 29-80; for the Telaga Batu [Sabokingking] inscription see J.G. de Casparis, *Prasasti Indonesia*, vol. II, (Bandung: Masa Baru, 1956), pp. 15-46; The more or less identical "*maṇḍala inscriptions*" are known from Karang Brahi (Jambi) and Kota Kapur (Bangka), see Coedès, "Les inscriptions", and from Palas Pasemah (South Lampung), see Boechari, "An Old Malay Inscription of Srivijaya at Palas Pasemah", *Pra Seminar Penelitian Sriwijaya* (Jakarta 1979), pp. 19-40; another badly weathered version of the *maṇḍala* inscription was also found in the Lampung district and has been dealt with by Boechari in his article "New Investigations on the Kedukan Bukit Inscription" *Untuk Bapak Guru (Bernet Kempers Festschrift)* (Jakarta 1986), pp. 33-56.

[16] de Casparis, *Prasasti Indonesia*, vol. II, pp. 1-5.

important inscription is the Telaga Batu or Sabokingking (Skk) inscription of Eastern Palembang, which contains dreadful curses against disloyal members of the royal family and local chiefs. The author of all these inscriptions seems to have been king Jayanāśa under whom Śrīvijaya experienced a period of breath-taking expansionism, conquering Malayu-Jambi and Kedah and attacking Java with a naval expedition.[17]

The Skk inscription begins with "an almost entirely unintelligible oath formula",[18] which is followed by a peculiar list of officers and occupational groups.[19] It includes princes (*rājaputra*), landlords (*bhūpati*), army leaders (*senāpati*), local magnates (*nāyaka*), confidants (*pratyaya)*, royal confidants (*hāji pratyaya*),[20] judges (*daṇḍa-nāyaka*), surveyors of groups of workmen (*tuhā an vatak = vuruḥ*), surveyors of low castes (*addhyāksi nījavarna*), cutlers (*vāṣīkarana*), ministers of princely status (*kumārāmātya*), regular and irregular troops (*cāṭabhata*), administrators (*adhikaraṇa*), clerks (*kāyastha*), architects (?, *sthāpaka*), naval captains (*puhāvaṃ*), merchants (*vaṇiyāga*), royal washermen (*marsī hāji*), and royal slaves (*hulun hāji*). De Casparis is certainly right to assume that this heterogeneous list contains those "categories of people that might constitute a possible danger"[21] to the security of the king and his court and who had therefore to swear the oath. The inscription furthermore refers to three categories of princes: the crown prince (*yuvarāja*), second crown prince (*prātiyuvarāja*), and other princes (*rājakumāra*).

---

[17] Coedès, "Les inscriptions", note 7 pp. 81-85; O.W. Wolters, *Early Indonesian Commerce. A Study of the Origins of Śrivijaya* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967), pp. 15-29.

[18] de Casparis, *Prasasti Indonesia*, vol. II, p. 36, note 1.

[19] The translation follows, in most cases, ibid., pp. 36ff.

[20] J.G. de Casparis (ibid., p. 37, n. 7) calls his translation of *hāji pratyaya* as "confidents of the king" as conjectural ("but we do not see another alternative"). Perhaps one could also think of the group of officers who are so frequently mentioned in later Javanese inscriptions as *mangilala drawya haji* ("persons who collect the lord's property"); *pratyaya* has the meaning of "revenue, income or tax"; D.C. Sircar, *Indian Epigraphical Glossary* (Delhi 1966), p. 262.

[21] de Casparis, *Prasasti Indonesia*, vol. II, p. 21.

These lists seemingly depict a well-organized hierarchy of princes, court officers, and servants at Śrīvijaya. As no identical lists are known from contemporary India or Southeast Asia, it is likely that they reflect a fairly true picture of an already quite advanced society at the court of Śrīvijaya. However, it may have been differentiated more horizontally than hierarchically structured. This assumption is based on the fact that the many Sanskrit titles of court officers are known only from the introductory list of the Skk inscription, which, later on, also thrice mentions the three categories of princes. Otherwise two other Malay terms were apparently considered much more important than these "foreign" names. These were *dātu* and *huluntuhān*. Dātu appears to be the traditional Malay title of a chief and occurs frequently in all Malay inscriptions of early Śrīvijaya. In the maṇḍala inscriptions even the "King" of Śrīvijaya is referred to by this traditional title.[22] *Huluntuhān*, the "slaves [*hulun*] and lords [*tuhan*]", occur seven times in the Skk inscription. This term obviously denotes the members of the traditional patriarchal household of the *dātu* of Śrīvijaya and therefore would have included all sorts of family members and retainers who acted on behalf of the *dātu* of Śrīvijaya. These *huluntuhān* most likely were identical with those officers mentioned in the introductory list.

As regards the spatial dimension of Śrīvijaya's political authority these Malay inscriptions contain several new pieces of important information that can be derived from several key-words in these inscriptions, in particular *kadātuan, vanua, samaryyāda, maṇḍala,* and *bhūmi*. In a recent paper[23] I have tried to show that these terms allow us to draw some conclusions on the early process of concentric state formation in seventh-century Sumatra. The center of this process was the kadātuan Śrīvijaya, "the place of the dātu" of Śrīvijaya, which had thus the same meaning as Javanese *kératon*,

---

[22] In the Talang Tuwo inscription of 684 C.E. king Jayanāśa is also addressed with the priestly (?) title *(da)punta hiyam*.

[23] H. Kulke, "*Kadātuan Śrīvijaya* - Empire or Kraton of Srivijaya? A Reassessment of the Epigraphical Evidence", in: *The Ancient Southeast Asian City and State,* forthcoming.

"the place of the ratu."[24] According to the Skk inscription the *kadātuan* contained the inner apartments of the residence (*tnaḥ rumaḥ*) of the dātu where his women folk (*bini hāji*) lived and where gold (*mas*) and tribute (*drawya*) were kept. Most likely the kadātuan also housed the dewata, or tutelary deity (a deified ancestor?), which, according to the *maṇḍala* inscriptions, protected the *kadātuan* of Śrīvijaya.

The *kadātuan* was surrounded by the *vanua Śrīvijaya*, the semi-urban area of Śrīvijaya.[25] Fragments of inscriptions refer to citizens (*paura*) and to a "*vihara* in this *vanua*".[26] This monastery may have housed some of the one thousand Buddhist monks whom the Chinese monk I-ching mentioned as being in Śrīvijaya during these years. Furthermore, the Buddhist park Śrīkṣetra established by King Jayanāśa and Bukit Senguntang, Śrīvijaya's "sacred center",[27] where a number of Buddhist remains have been unearthed, may have been situated within this *vanua Śrīvijaya*. Moreover, we may assume that it contained several truly agricultural villages and, in particular, the markets frequented by the foreign merchants (*vaṇiyāga*) and sailors (*puhāvam*) who are mentioned in the Skk inscription. The *kadātuan* and the *vanua* formed the nucleus of Śrīvijaya. Only these two terms occur in connection with the name Śrīvijaya[28] and, what is perhaps equally revealing, only these two central spheres are known by their Malay terms. The other more distant surrounding "circles" of this nuclear area are referred to in

---

[24] J.G. de Casparis and Coedès translate *kadatuan* as "Empire" and "province" respectively. Boechari prefers "kingdom", although he admits that, strictly speaking, *kadātuan* is the equivalent of *kératon*, "Old Malay Inscription", p. 23.

[25] J.G. de Casparis (*Prasasti Indonesia* Vol. II, p. 14) and Boechari ("Old Malay Inscription, p. 22) translate *vanua* as "country" and Coedès as "le pays" ("Les Inscriptions", p. 35, n. 12).

[26] de Casparis, *Prasasti Indonesia*, Vol. II, p.14.

[27] O.W. Wolters, "Restudying Somee Chinese Writings on Srivijaya", *Indonesia* 42 (1986): 1-41.

[28] *dātu Śrīvijaya* is mentioned in all *maṇḍala* inscriptions, whereas *vanua Śrīvijaya* is known from the Kedukan Bukit inscription.

the inscriptions only by the Sanskrit names *samaryyāda*, *maṇḍala*, and *bhūmi*.

The term *samaryyāda* is very unusual; in fact, it is unknown in Indian[29] or Southeast Asian epigraphy. De Casparis translates the term as "frontier province" whereas I prefer its literal meaning "having the same boundaries" (*maryyāda*). The *samaryyāda* thus would have referred to the neighboring region beyond the *vanua* Śrīvijaya. According to the Skk inscription the *samaryyāda* was connected with the central *vanua* by special roads (*samaryyāda-patha*). This hinterland was populated by an obviously large number of *dātu* who resided - acccording to the Skk inscription - in their own places (*sthāna*) on their own land (*deśa*). But these local *dātu* have come under the control of the *dātu* of Śrīvijaya and his *huluntuhān* who appear to have been particularly active in the *samaryyāda* hinterland. The endeavor of these *dātu* to again become "independent" (*swasthā*) must have posed one of the greatest dangers to the security of the *dātu* of Śrīvijaya and the *kadātuan* as these *dātu* are threatened several times by the imprecations of the Skk inscription.

The fourth important term for our consideration about the spatial dimension of Śrīvijaya's statehood is *maṇḍala*. It occurs only once in the Skk inscription in the famous passage *maṃrakṣāña sakala-maṇḍala kadātuanku*, which de Casparis translates "you who protect all the provinces of my empire."[30] I have tried to show that, in the context of early Śrīvijaya, the term *maṇḍala* most likely did not refer to centrally administered provinces in the extended core area of an empire, as such provinces did not yet exist in early kingdoms; they became a typical feature only of the later imperial kingdoms.[31] In the context of early kingdoms, the term *maṇḍala* usually referred to autonomous or semi-autonomous principalities and chiefdoms at their periphery. Several such *maṇḍala* are known

---

[29] Thus *Samaryyāda* is not mentioned in D.C. Sircar's *Glossary*.

[30] de Casparis, *Prasasti Indonesia*, Vol. II, p. 43.

[31] See chapter 14.

from contemporary Southern and Eastern India.[32] In the case of late seventh-century Śrīvijaya "all the maṇḍalas" therefore appears to have meant those outlying regions where the above-mentioned "*maṇḍala* inscriptions" have been found. The exact nature of Śrīvijaya's control over its *maṇḍala* is unknown. They had certainly been conquered by Śrīvijaya's army (*bala*), which is mentioned several times in Śrīvijaya's inscriptions. However we have no evidence at all that they had come under the direct political control of Śrīvijaya as no *huluntuhān* or royal princes of Śrīvijaya are mentioned in these *maṇḍala* inscriptions. They were obviously still ruled by the local *dātu* who lived in their own *vanua*, as is known from these inscriptions. They had been recognized (*sanyāsa*) in their position by Śrīvijaya. But their precarious loyalty obviously had to be improved by the *maṇḍala* inscriptions and their peculiar mixture of imprecations and taking of the oath of allegiance. However, military coercion and imprecations alone would not have sufficed to establish an enduring relation. Of equal importance must have been the incentive to participate in Śrīvijaya's international trade.

Apart from providing us with a conceivable model of an early concentric state, Śrīvijaya also provides us with the first generic term of such a state. As mentioned above, Coedès, de Casparis, and Boechari regarded *vanua, kadātuan,* and *huluntuhān* as just such a comprehensive term and translated them accordingly as "le pays", "empire", or "kingdom". But, according to my interpretation, none of these expressions had such a comprehensive spatial connotation in the context of early Śrīvijaya. The word *bhūmi*, however, appears to have been such a generic term for Śrīvijaya's statehood. In Sanskrit, *bhūmi* means primarily "earth" or "soil" but also "realm" and "country". It occurs twice in Śrīvijaya's inscription. One instance is in a more or less identical passage found in all the *maṇḍala* inscriptions, which threatened the disloyal "people inside the land [that is] under the order of *kadātuan*" (*uraṅ di dalaṅña*

[32] Thus, in the early Middle Ages, Tosali, the center of coastal Orissa in Eastern India, was surrounded by more than half a dozen such semi-autonomous *maṇḍala*-principalities; see S.N. Rajaguru, *Inscriptions of Orissa*, vol. I, 2. [300-700 A.D.] (Bhubaneswar 1958); and B. Misra, *Dynasties of Medieval Orissa* (Calcutta 1933).

bhūmi ājñāña kadātuanku).[33] As this passage occurs only in the *maṇḍala* inscriptions it has to be inferred that the places where they have been found either constituted a *bhūmi* or formed part of a larger polity which was called *bhūmi*. Although the first meaning cannot be excluded, two other references make the latter connotation of *bhūmi* more likely in the context of early Indonesian history. The first of these references comes from the important passage of the Kota Kapur inscription of the year 686 which announces the departure of an army expedition against *bhūmi jāwa*, which had not yet become submissive to Śrīvijaya. Obviously, Java was not regarded just as one of the many *vanua* or *maṇḍala* surrounding Śrīvijaya but as an equally matched opponent of Śrīvijaya. The other evidence of a *bhūmi* polity comes from several inscriptions of late ninth and early tenth-century Java that refer to *bhūṃi* Matarām (infra). As in the case of *bhūmi* Java and *bhūmi* Matarām, the Śrīvijayan concept of "the *bhūmi* under the control of my *kadātuan*" apparently referred to the whole sphere that had come under the control of Śrīvijaya.

Comparing Mūlavarman's and Pūrṇavarman's fifth-century polities with Śrīvijaya in the late seventh century we are able to recognize several important structural changes. The "first victories" (*prathama vijiya*) of these earliest kings certainly had led to the defeat of neighboring "landlords" (*pārthiva*) and "hostile towns" (*arinagara*). And in some cases a victorious "lord of the landlords" (*pārthiva-indra*) may have been able to collect (most likely irregular!) tribute (*kara*). But none of their earliest inscriptions allow us to infer that this pristine political development presupposed or led to far-reaching structural changes. The courts of these early rulers still remained patriarchal households. Their rule was the affair of the chief's family (*kula*) or lineage/"dynasty" (*vaṃśa*). It is this background that explains the frequent mention of these two kinship terms in these early inscriptions, that is, *kula* and, particularly, *vaṃśa*. However, it is worth mentioning that these Sanskrit terms only occur whenever the foundation of a "dynasty" is reported in inscriptions. As no equivalent Malay or Javanese word ever occurs in inscriptions written in these languages, it is likely

---

[33] Boechari, "Old Malay Inscription", p. 38 and Coedès, "Les inscriptions", p. 47.

that these Sanskrit terms were required for the definition of an apparently new social institution, that is, a "ruling lineage" in a hitherto rather unstratified tribal society.

This situation had already changed considerably in late seventh-century Sumatra around present-day Palembang. Whether international trade by the "sailors and traders" (*puhavaṃ vaṇiyaga*) mentioned in the Skk inscription was the main cause of this change is still an open question. But it is evident that the inscriptions of Śrīvijaya which have been discovered around Palembang depict an already fairly well-developed society. But in this regard, too, we have to distinguish between different spatial zones of social change. Social differentiation and stratification was strongest in the *vanua*, center from where its influence spread into its *samaryyāda* hinterland. But we have no evidence of such a development in the outer *maṇḍala*, even though we may conjecture that the *dāṭu* of these regions had their own *huluntuhān*. But particularly in these cases they would have been patriarchal "servants and lords" rather than administrative officers.

Apart from new social stratification in *vanua* Śrīvijaya, the other decisive difference between the epigraphical evidence of fifth-century Kalimantan and Java on the one side and late seventh century Śrīvijaya on the other side is an incipient change in the center-periphery relations. Śrīvijaya seems to have been the first Indonesian state that succeeded in extending its direct political authority beyond its own *vanua* into the *samaryyāda* hinterland and to conquer even far-off powerful chieftaincies and trade emporia (e.g. Malayu and Kedah) and to establish some sort of hegenomy over these outer *maṇḍala*. Śrīvijaya's rapid expansion was due to two new factors which had different spatial significances. First, Śrīvijaya's direct rule in the *samaryyāda* hinterland was based primarily on its disposal of a fairly well-developed staff of "administrators", the *huluntuhān* of the Skk inscription. However, these "officers" still had to face various types of difficulties at the center and in its hinterland that are vividly accursed in the Skk inscription. As shown by J.G. Casparis in his analysis of the fragmentary inscriptions, *vanua* Śrīvijaya was still afflicted by

dangerous rebellions of internal insurgents.[34] Second, Śrīvijaya's control over the far-off *maṇḍala* presupposed the existence or at least the temporary availability of a strong army (*vala*). Its inscriptions show that the main cause of Śrīvijaya's hold over the outer *maṇḍala* was the ability to muster an army of apparently uncontested strength. Nevertheless, Śrīvijaya's authority still remained very precarious in these *maṇḍala*. Śrīvijaya's major problem at this point appears to have been its "failure" either to integrate at least some of the more powerful *dātu* chiefs of the *maṇḍala* into its own central court or to obliterate and replace them with loyal members of its own court. In fact, the solution of these center-periphery relations remained the crucial problem of all pre-modern states. As we will see, the Matarām-Śailendra dynasties chose the first and Majapahit the second method to solve this problem.

In regard to the main concern of this article, the epigraphical evidence for the "city" and the "state" in early Indonesia, Śrīvijaya provides for the first time a rather clear picture of an already well-developed concentric state in early Indonesia. Mūlavarman's polity had comprised only two such spatial spheres. These were a still rather undifferentiated center consisting of a *pura* (=kraton?), a "most holy place" (*kṣetra*), and the living places of the "royal" *vaṃsa* and the Brahmins. Beyond this center a group of unspecified defeated chiefs (*pārthiva*) existed whom Mūlavarman claims to have made his "tribute-givers" (*karadā*). Pūrṇavarman's inscriptions from west Java offer a slightly more-developed stage of an early polity. As all three epigraphical terms that occur in these inscriptions and that are relevant for our study, that is, *śibira*, *purī*, and *nagara*, have a clear urban connotation, Tārumānagara appears to have been a typical early "city state". But we have to keep in mind that in the context of early Indonesia these Sanskrit terms may have referred to kratons of strong chiefdoms and Hinduized "litte kings" rather than to an urban "city".

The major contribution of Śrīvijaya's inscriptions to our study is the fact that they indicate several spatial spheres of its political authority. And moreover, for the first time in early Indonesia, a generic term, *bhūmi*, for the "state" is given. This *bhūmi* realm was

---

[34] de Casparis, *Prasasti Indonesia*, Vol. II, pp. 4ff (particularly inscriptions a and b).

divided into three zones, that is, the *vanua* center, its *samaryyāda* hinterland, and the outer *maṇḍala*. The center, too, consisted of two distinct zones, the *kadātuan* (or kraton) of the ruling *dātu* and its surrounding *vanua*. *Vanua* Śrīvijaya seems to have comprised a densely populated area at present-day Palembang with urbanized "pockets". However, it is astonishing that we only once hear of Śrīvijaya's "citizens" (*paura*) whereas the terms *pura* or *nagara* never occur in Śrīvijaya's inscriptions. Whether this evidence is sufficient to infer that no "city" outside the *kadātuan Śrīvijaya* existed in the late seventh century is difficult to decide. But the epigraphical evidence makes such an inference quite likely.[35] A possible reason why we may search in vain for the epigraphical terms *pura* and *nagara* in the context of early Śrīvijaya may be the fact that much of its urban life took place in the many houseboats on the Musi river.

III.

The two earliest dated inscriptions of the middle period of early Indonesia, the Canggal inscription of Sañjaya of the year 732 C.E.[36] and the Dinaya inscription of 760 C.E.,[37] belong to central and eastern Java, respectively. Their date is only about two generations later than Śrīvijaya's early inscriptions. But in regard to Java itself, there is a wide gap of three centuries between Pūrṇavarman and Sañjaya. Both inscriptions of the eighth century provide some new evidence of a conceptual and structural development of the "city" and the "state" in early Indonesia. Sañjaya's inscription reports the consecration of "a liṅga on a mountain" (*prātiṣṭhipat parvate liṅgaṃ*) in a place or "country" (*deśa*) called Kuñjarakuñja in the island (*dvīpa*) of Java. Sañjaya is praised for protecting the "royal highways" (*rājapathi*), defeating "numerous

---

[35] In this connection further excavations at the newly discovered sites at Karanganyar in western Palembang will be most important. See P.-Y. Manguin, "Palembang et Sriwijaya".

[36] Sarkar, *Corpus*, pp. 15-24.

[37] Ibid., pp. 25-33.

circles of neighboring chiefs" (*aneka-sāmanta-cakra-rāja*), and for ruling justly his kingdom (*jājya*). From later inscriptions we know that the Matarām dynasty praised him as "king" (*ratu*) and founder of their dynasty.[38] Furthermore it is worth mentioning that Sañjaya's Canggal inscription provides the first epigraphical evidence for agrarian extension when it mentions that Java was "rich in rice and other seeds".

The evidence of Sañjaya's inscriptions as well as that of later inscriptions leaves no doubt that Sañjaya established a genuine early kingdom, in fact the first known in Javanese history. It is of particular interest for our study that the concept of his state and the *praśasti* eulogy of the inscription were much nearer to contemporary Indian models than the earlier cases that so far have been discussed. For the first time, the "state" is called *rājya*. It comprised, most likely, several *deśa* which were linked by "royal highways". It was surrounded by a *sāmantacakra*, the common term of Indian and future Javanese inscriptions referring to the "circle of (originally independent) neighboring rulers (*sāmanta*)".[39] According to the Indian concept they had to be subjugated to the central king. Another indicator of Indian influence is the consecration of a purely Hindu temple, dedicated to Śiva.

But despite this evidently strong Indian influence, Sañjaya's inscription lacks several important indicators of contemporary Indian statehood and kingship. This is most evident in regard to the complete absence of officers usually mentioned in connection with such a grand ceremony as the establishment of Sañjaya's "royal" Śivaliṅgaṃ. Whether this evidence allows the *argumentum ex silentio* that Sañjaya's court still consisted only of his extended family (*kula*), which in fact is mentioned twice in the inscription, is a matter of conjecture. But in this regard it has to be remembered that Sañjaya's "dynasty" was not yet an old-established one. He traced his genealogy back only to his father Sanna, and he himself is praised in a later inscription by the Malay title *ratu*

---

[38] Ibid., vol. II, p. 68 (Mantyasih I copper-plates, B, 8).

[39] L.L. Gopal, "Samanta - Its Varying Significance in Ancient India", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* (1963): 21-37.

whereas his successors are glorified as *mahārāja*.[40] In this regard it is significant that his father is reported to have ruled his people by the traditional method of "conciliation and gifts" (*sāma-dāna*). Another interesting point is the fact that Sañjaya's inscription does not contain any term that can be associated with an urbanized settlement. This again does not automatically mean that no such settlement existed in his *rājya* in Central Java. But at least this evidence shows that he did not regard it necessary (or important enough) to mention such a settlement in his inscription.

A rather different picture of an early kingdom is depicted in the Dinaya inscription of the year 760 C.E., the earliest one known from east Java. Much has been written about it because of several uncertainties about its contents, which, however, need not bother us here.[41] It reports the consecration of a temple and a stone image of the divine seer Agastya by king (*rāja*) Gajayāna who protected a *pura*, called Kañjuruha. King Gajayāna urged his relatives (*bāndhava*), sons (*nṛpasuta*), and his principal ministers (*mantri mukhya*) not to act against this gift. He appealed to the members of the "royal dynasty" (*vaṃśa nṛpa*) to follow his example and to perform meritorious acts and thus to protect the kingdom (*rājya*).

The interesting evidence in regard to the "city" of Kañjuruha is the fact that the first verse mentions that the *purī* was protected by Gajayāna's deceased father Devasiṃha, whereas the next verse reports that Gajayāna protected the *pura* Kañjuruha after his father had died. Furthermore we are told about "citizens" (*paura*) who, together with the "groups of leaders" (*nāyaka-gaṇa)*, constructed the temple. The juxtaposition of *purī* and pura in the first two verses, which were protected by the deceased father and his ruling son respectively, allows us to infer that in this case *purī* may have referred to the *kraton* and *pura* to the "city" of Kañjuruhan. The *purī* thus appears to have been protected by the (deified) ancestor (as was *kadātuan* Śrīvijaya by its *devatā*), whereas King Gajayāna

---

[40] See above note 38.

[41] F.D.K. Bosch, "Het Lingga-Heiligdom van Dinaja", *Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal-, Land-, en Volkenkunde* 64 (1924): 225-91; J.G. de Casparis, "Nogmals de Sanskrit-inscriptie op den steen van Dinojo", *Ibid.* 81 (1941) 499-513; W.J. van der Meulen, "The Purī Pūtikeśvarapāvita and the Pura Kāñjuruhan", in *Bijdragen tot de Tall-, Land-, en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch-Indie* 132 (1976): 445-62.

protected the *pura* "capital" of his *jājya*. It was inhabited by *paura*, groups of *nāyaka*, ministers (*mantri*), and Brahmins who, too, are mentioned in the inscription.

In contrast to Sañjaya's inscription from central Java, the Dinaya inscription from east Java thus reveals an urban center comprising the *purī*-kraton and the *pura*. The latter was inhabited by members of the royal family, by "citizens", officers, and priests. However, although Gajayāna's "state" is called a "kingdom" (*rājya*), the inscription does not contain a single piece of evidence that would allow us to assume the existence of administrative units. This fact reminds us of Sañjaya's nearly contemporary *rājya* where we came to know about the existence of at least one *deśa*. Despite the mention of "principal ministers" and "groups of leaders" and "citizens", the strong emphasis of the responsibility of "royal relatives", princes, and members of the "royal dynasty" for the welfare of the *rājya* makes it likely that Gajayāna's "state", too, consisted mainly of an urbanized center that may have had strong relations with, but only little or even no political control over, its surrounding hinterland. The major difference between Mūlavarman's polity in the fifth century and Gajayāna's eighth-century "kingdom" thus appears to pertain to the degree of urbanization of its center rather than to the development of its territorial dimension.

IV

The late eighth century bears witness to the rise of the Buddhist Śailendras, one of Southeast Asia's most important dynasties to which the world owes one of its greatest religious monuments, the Borobudur. But despite its importance in early Indonesian history and its historically established links with Sumatra, the Malay Peninsula, Śrī Lanka, Bengal, and South India till the eleventh century, its geneaological history and, even more, the structure and extent of its kingdom, particularly during its most important period in Central Java in the eighth and ninth centuries, is only partly known.[42]

---

[42] Coedès, "Les inscriptions", pp. 87-93, 107-9; J.G. de Casparis, *Prasasti Indonesia* II, pp. 288ff.

The major reason for our lack of knowledge is, no doubt, the relatively small number of inscriptions. But in the same way as the international relations of the Śailendras and their masterpieces of art and architecture indicate a new stage of cultural, societal, and political development, the dynasty's few inscriptions, too, reflect a new type of full-fledged kingdom. Already the earliest-dated Sanskrit inscriptions of the eighth century speak of a *rājya* state, ruled by a *mahārāja* who had defeated the neighboring *sāmanta-rāja*. Ministers (*mantri*), (local?) lords (*pati*), and superintendents of *deśa* areas (*deśādhyakṣa*) were in charge of the administration.

In this connection it is of particular importance that the Kalasan Sanskrit inscription of the year 778 C.E. mentions for the first time the local *deśa* officers *paṅgkura, tavān*, and *tīrip* which belong to the large number of different Javanese titles of officers that occur frequently in Javanese inscriptions of the ninth century and later. The obviously well-established hierarchy of officers, linking the central court with intermediary, territorially defined, administrative units and villages, is certainly the most important new epigraphical evidence of the classical age of central Javanese history under the Śailendra and Matarām dynasties. This is not the place to discuss in detail this complicated administrative set-up of Central Javanese kingdoms.[43] Suffice it to say that it appears to have been the outcome of a double process that must have been operating for a much longer time than evidenced in the inscriptions. On the local level of the *vanua*, agrarian expansion, translocal trade, and social differentiation had created a vast number of village elders and authorities. The early history of this process is unknown to us as we come across its result only when these *vanua* authorities were already fully existing in central Javanese inscriptions in the early ninth century. The other aspect of this process is of equal relevance for our study as it pertains to the political expansion of supra-local authority. Mūlavarman's and Śrī Māra's inscriptions illustrated the incipient stage of this process. The inscriptions of Pūrṇavarman, Sañjaya, and Gajayāna depicted further stages of this development.

---

[43] See for instance de Casparis' detailed epigraphical study of the Tjaṇḍi Perot inscriptions of 850 C.E. in ibid., pp. 211-43 or W.F. Stutterheim's study of the Cunggrang II inscription of the year 929 C.E. in *Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal-, Land-, en Volkenkunde* 65 (1925): 208-81.

But in their cases, too, no political authority appears to have as yet been established permanently beyond the chiefly "Stammland" and its immediate hinterland. This decisive step of early state formation was made by Śrīvijaya which extended its political control into distant *maṇḍala*. However, Śrīvijaya's authority in these *maṇḍala* continued to be precarious, as their local *dātu* leaders remained a threat to Śrīvijaya's *dātu* rather than being integrated into the political structure of the *bhūmi* state.

According to our epigraphical evidence, political expansion through integration occurred only with the rise of the Śailendra dynasty and reached its first culmination towards the end of the central Javanese period in the late ninth century.[44] It is worth noticing that in contrast to the Sanskrit inscriptions of the early period of Java, this ninth-century process of intensive state formation in central and, from the tenth century onwards, east Java is documented nearly exclusively by Javanese-language inscriptions with but little Sanskrit terminology. The basis of this expansion of royal authority was the stepwise integration of neighboring areas. Even though they remained "under the jurisdiction" (*watek*) of local chiefs (*raka*) some of these chiefs slowly rose to high administrative or even "ministerial" positions in the patriarchal central court. In the same way as these chiefs retained their "Stammland" as their own *watek*, the king (*mahārāja, ratu*) kept his own *watek* land under his direct control. Although having thus, at least theoretically, the same territorial basis of authority, the "Stammland" of the future *ratu* may have been larger, perhaps more fertile, and linked to translocal trade routes. Certain "material" factors must have given the family/lineage of the future *ratu* an advantage over his neighboring chiefs (*raka*) during this process of early state formation in central Java.

As already mentioned, the early history of this process of territorial and political integration of the *raka* into a central court

---

44 van Naerrsen, *Economic and Administrative History*, pp. 46ff; Boechari, "Some Considerations of the Problem of the Shift of Mataram's Centre of Government from Central to East Java in the 10th Century A.D.," *Bulletin of Research Centre of Archaeology of Indonesia* 10 (Jakarta 1976); J. Wisseman-Christie, "Raja and Rama: The Classical State in Early Java", in: *Symbols and Hierarchies*, ed. Gessick; J.G. Casparis, "Some Notes on Relations between Central and Local Government in Ancient Java", in: *Southeast Asia*, ed. Marr and Milner, pp. 49-63.

of a *ratu* is largely unknown, as these *raka* are usually referred to only in the inscriptions of a central *ratu* when a certain degree of their integration had already occurred. However, among the early inscriptions of classical central Java several inscriptions are known to have been edited by local chiefs without referring to a *ratu* or *rājā*. A rare case even allows some conclusions about the process of political integration when the central Javanese court was just moving to the east. In 891 C.E. the *rakryan* of Kanuruhan (a locality most likely identical with Kañjuruhan of the Dinaya inscription of 760 C.E.) established a freehold by his own "favor" (*anugraha*).[45] But only twenty-four years later, in 915 C.E., it was the central "Great King" (mahārāja) Dakṣa who did the favor (*anugraha*) to allow the *rakai* of Kanuruhan to establish another freehold in his own *watek* Kanuruhan.[46] Between 891 and 915, under circumstances still unknown, the Lord of Kanuruhan thus had come under the authority of the Mahāraja Dakṣa.[47] During the next century the *rakryan* of Kanuruhan rose to the highest administrative position at the central court, a position which they held for several centuries.

The stepwise integration of local magnates into the central court and the encroachment of the royal "persons who collect the lord's property" (*mangilala drawya hāji*) upon the *watek* and *vanua* is perhaps the least known aspect of state formation in early classical Javanese history. But it seems to have been an extremely protracted process that finally worked in favor of the central dynasty only temporarily in the fourteenth century, when Majapahit was able to exchange the local *raka* in the extended core area of its kingdom with members of its own dynasty.

The structure of the Javanese kingdoms of the ninth through early thirteenth centuries is fairly well reflected in the epigraphical evidence and may be summarized as follows. The unique feature of the Javanese kingdom during this period is the highly elaborated and strictly fixed hierarchy of state officers and local

---

[45] Inscription of Belingavan (Singasari), Sarkar, *Corpus*, vol. I, pp. 295-303.

[46] Inscription of Sugih Manek (Singasari), Sarkar, *Corpus*, vol. II, pp. 145-60.

[47] van Naerssen, *Economic and Administrative History*, pp. 53ff.

authorities as listed in these inscriptions. The establishment and continuous maintenance of this hierarchy appears to have been one of the main means of authority for the center. This hierarchy of patrimonial officers, however, should not be automatically equated with a hierarchy of administrative officers and administrative territorial units. Apart from "personal" *watek* and from *vanua* with their village authorities, which are frequently mentioned in inscriptions, we still find nearly no terms that hint at a more sophisticated spatial structure of the kingdom. Very rarely does the term *deśa* occur, which refers to a territorial unit of a larger size than *vanua*. An inscription of the year 824 C.E. appears to indicate that the *rājya* constituted of many *deśa*.[48] The Sanskrit term *deśa* may thus have to be equated with *watek*.[49] This inference perhaps may be corroborated by another early central Javanese inscription of the year 782 C.E. It reports the consecration of a Mañjuśrī image by a Śailendra king and his *guru* who had come from Bengal (*gauḍidvīpa*). The image was installed by the king in order to protect "his *deśa*" (*deśasya tasya*).[50] Here *deśa* apparently refers to the land of the king, that is, his *Stammland* or *watek*.

Important information about the structural concept of the Javanese state during this period can be derived from a passage which is repeated more or less identically in a few inscriptions of the late ninth and early tenth centuries. It occurs for the first time in an inscription of King Lokāpala of the year 880 C.E.[51] At the end of an extremely long list of Hindu deities who are called upon for protection of a newly established freehold, the tutelary deities are invoked: "Also all you deities who are known to protect the kraton of the illustrious Great King in the country of Matarām" (*devatā prasiddha mangrakṣa kadātuan śrī mahārāja i bhūmi i matarām*). Nearly exactly the same text is repeated in the same epigraphical context in the stone inscription of Sugih Manek near

[48] Inscription of Gandasuli, line 8D; de Casparis, *Prasasti Indonesia*, vol. I, p. 61.

[49] J.G. de Casparis suggests "landstreek" (ibid., p. 68).

[50] Inscription of Kelurak, Sarkar, *Corpus*, vol. II, pp. 41-48.

[51] Copper-plates of Vuatan Tija (Manggung), Sarkar, *Corpus*, vol. I, pp. 250-61.

Singasari of the year 915 C.E.[52] Thirteen years later this invocation occurs again in the so-called Minto Stone from the region of Malang, however with an important addition.[53] The tutelary deities are invoked "who are known to protect the kraton of the Great King in Medang in the country of Matarām". For the first time, Medang, the capital of the central Javanese kingdom of Matarām, is explicitly mentioned in this context. This latter version of the invocation is then again repeated twice in inscriptions of the years 942 and 944 C.E.[54]

In the context of our study, the most relevant aspect of these inscriptions is the fact that they reveal, at least partly, a repetition of the Śrīvijaya model. As in Śrīvijaya, the center was the kraton (*or kadātuan*) of the Mahārāja, which was protected by ancestor deities. It was situated in (the "capital") Madang which may have been identical with *vanua Matarām*, a resident of which is mentioned in an inscription of the year 919 C.E. (*anak vanua i matarām*).[55] This center was surrounded, as we know from other contemporary inscriptions, by the *deśa* or *watek* of other *raka* or *rakryan*. The state that comprised these "segments" was called *bhūmi*, a term we came to know for the first time in Śrīvijaya's inscriptions. The most important and, in contrast to early Śrīvijaya, new political element of state formation in pre-Majapahit Java is the obviously very successful integration of allodial chiefs and "lords" into the patrimonial hierarchy of the central court without, however, uprooting them in their own *Stammland*.[56] No such attempts to integrate the *dātu* into the court hierarchy are known from the inscriptions of Śrīvijaya. In contrast to *bhūmi Śrīvijaya*,

[52] Sarkar, *Corpus*, vol. II, pp. 144-60.

[53] Ibid., pp. 227-48.

[54] OJO, XLVIII and LI; see also W.J. van der Meulen, "King Sanjaya and his Successors", in: *Indonesia* 28 (1979); 17-54 (esp. pp. 24ff).

[55] Sarkar, *Corpus*, vol. II, p. 165.

[56] Boechari, "Rakryan Mahamantri i Hino. A Study on the Highest Court Dignitary of Ancient Java up to the 13th Century A.D.", *Beberapa Karya Dalam Ilmu-Ilmu Sastra* (Publikasi Ilmiah, No. 2), Universitas Indonesia 1975/76, pp. 61-114.

however, *bhūmi Matarām* appears not to have included outlying *maṇḍala*.

Furthermore, the territorial administration of *bhūmi* Matarām in central Java and its successor kingdoms in east Java may have been structured even less than Śrīvijaya in the late seventh century. At least, we have no inscriptional evidence, for instance, of the kingdom (*bhūmi*) of Keḍiri from the late eleventh to early thirteenth centuries which would allow us to come to a different estimation of its statehood. There seem to have been only two exceptions to this "rule", that is, king Siṇḍok in the early tenth century and Airlangga in the early eleventh century. They obviously had tried to extend their political control even beyond those *watek* or *deśa* that had already come under their hegemony. But their personal, most likely military, success did not survive their demise. Airlangga's inability to perpetuate his temporary success was later on transformed into the famous myth of the division of the "empire" by the king himself. However, Airlangga's striving for "imperial" hegemony (he was the first Javanese king who assumed the imperial title *ratu cakravartin*[57]) became a major prop of the imperial ideology of later Singasari and Majapahit rulers.

During the Matarām and Keḍiri period, the "*bhumi* state" of east Java thus remained the classical concentric "Early Kingdom."[58] It comprised the central nuclear area, consisting of the kraton and the *Stammland* or *watek* of the central dynasty, and the surrounding *watek* whose *rakryan* and *rakai* had been integrated into the patrimonial staff of the central court. The local administration in the royal and allodial *watek* remained in the hands of the traditional village authorities.

Finally it should be pointed out that throughout the period of the Śailendra dynasty and the kingdom of Matarām and Keḍiri, no epigraphical evidence exists about the existence of "cities" except those of the "capitals" of these kingdoms, e.g. Madang and Keḍiri. But neither are they called *pura* or *nagara* nor are urban settlements known in the *watek* of the *rakryan*. According to the epigraphical

---

[57] OJO, LXI.

[58] See chapter 14.

evidence, state formation in Java in the eighth to early thirteenth centuries appears to have operated largely without urbanization.

V.

The most dramatic changes in the process of state formation and urbanization in pre-Islamic Indonesia took place in the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries under Singasari and Majapahit. For nearly two centuries after Airlangga, the history of Java had retreated to the middle Brantas valley. However, the small but obviously prospering kingdom of Keḍiri preserved faithfully the structural concept of the administrative set-up of the Matarām kingdom and the imperial ideology of Airlangga's short-lived east Javanese kingdom. This ideology was based on the (unter Airlangga only partly achieved[59])·unification of the two ast Javanese nuclear areas Janggala and Pañjalu and the (never-realized) hegemony over the whole of Javadvīpa. The myth of a unified kingdom of Janggala and Pañjalu (and its alleged partition by Airlangga) and east Java's imperial claim over the whole of Java served as legitimation of the imperial expansionism of late Singasari which Coedès summarized as follows:

> The reign of Kṛtanagara [the last king of Singasari] was marked by a considerable expansion of Javanese power in all directions. In 1275, taking advantage of the decline of Śrīvijaya, he sent a military expedition to the west which established Javanese suzerainty over Malayu and probably also over Sunda, Madura and part of the Malay peninsula. After establishing his authority in Sumatra, Kṛtanagara turned toward Bali, whose king he brought back as a prisoner in 1284.[60]

In east Java itself, the most important change was the subjugation of Keḍiri under Singasari's hegemony, which had already been

---

[59] See Boechari, "Sri Maharaja Mapanji Garasakan", *Madjalah Ilmu-Ilmu Sastra Indonesia* 4, 1/2 (1968): 1-26.

[60] Coedès, *Indianized States*, p. 198.

finally established under Viṣṇuvardhana, Kṛtanagara's father. However, Keḍiri still retained an autonomous status as a *sāmanta-rājya*.[61] King Jayakatwang of Keḍiri still felt strong enough to attack and defeat Singasari in 1292 C.E. During the occupation of the royal residence of Singasari, King Kṛtanagara died. Keḍiri's new hegemony over the whole of eastern Java however came to an abrupt end when Kṛtanagara's son-in-law, Raden Vijaya, with the help of a Chinese expeditionary army, defeated Jayakatwang's army and established himself as the first ruler in the newly founded city of Majapahit.

The kingdom of Majapahit was truly a successor state of Singasari, both in its "internal" policy in eastern Java and in its expansionistic "external" policy in the outer regions. But in both aspects the state of Majapahit represents the culmination of state formation in pre-modern Indonesia. As regards the "internal" policy in eastern Java, the most decisive new development under Majapahit was the systematic replacement of the allodial local *raka* and *rakryan* in East Java by members of the royal family and, in a few cases, by deserving members of the court. It was more than a mere symbolic act that, already in 1295, Raden Vijaya crowned the eldest son of one of his wives (he was married to four daughters of Kṛtanagara) as Prince of Keḍiri. His new policy of systematic annexation or "provincialization" of all neighboring *watek* or *deśa* and their many "little kings" led to a series of revolts, which, however, appear to have been successfully supressed by Majapahit. According to our epigraphical evidence, Majapahit succeeded for the first time (after Śrīvijaya's similar attempts) to extend its political control considerably beyond its own *Stammland*, this time, however, by a ruthless policy of annexation and "dynastification" of its hinterland.

In this regard it is significant that the Nāgara-Kertāgama, the famous court chronicle of Majapahit composed by Prapañca in the year 1365 C.E., begins with a descriptive list of the various towns (*nagara*) held by members of the royal family as demesne in the hinterland of Majapahit. Summarizing this chapter, the Nāgara-

---

[61] Nāgara-Kertāgamam 44,1; in Th.G. Pigeaud, *Java in the 14th Century. A Study in Cultural History. The Nāgara-Kertāgama by Rakawi Prapañca of Majapahit*, 1365 A.D., 5 vols. (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1960).

Kertāgama concludes "All Illustrious Javanese Kings and Queens, the honoured ones who equally are distinguished by their towns (*nagara*), each having one for his or her own, in one place (*eka sthāna*), in Wilwa Tikta (= Majaphit) they hold in their lap the honoured Prince-Overlord."[62]

As is known from other Southeast and South Asian kingdoms of this age, too, (e.g. Angkor and the Cōḷas), the establishment of an "Imperial Kingdom" required a considerable enlargement of the original nuclear area or *Stammland* of the ruling dynasty. In this extended core region the ruling dynasty had to strive for uncontested access to the agrarian surplus and, wherever possible, for some sort of control over, and sharing of, the long-distance trade. However, even in these "Imperial Kingdoms" of pre-modern South and Southeast Asia, the central dynasties still had to share the revenue from these sources with their own local representatives, if they were princely members of the dynasty or members of the patrimonial staff. The transfer of resources from the local and intermediate levels to the imperial center thus remained a crucial problem even within the core region of these large imperial kingdoms. Although the imperial kings had succeeded in extending their uncontested political authority by eliminating all sorts of potential putschists in their extended core region, actual political control remained fragmented. The "segments" still existed even though they had come under members of the central dynasty.[63] But in contrast to the earlier cases (e.g. in 760 C.E. in Kañjuruhan in east Java) where a "family dynasty" (*kula-vaṃśa*) depended mainly on its own *Stammland*, the imperial dynasty of Majapahit was able to extend its patrimonial control far beyond these pristine boundaries. It systematically distributed its hinterland to members of the dynasty who thus became "share holders" of the state. The central core region of Majapahit had come under a "family regime".

The very center of this family enterprise was the royal compound (*pura*) or kraton. Accordingly the second chapter of the Nāgara-

---

[62] Nāgara-Kertāgama, 6,4.

[63] For the concept of the segmentary state see B. Stein, "The Segmentary State in South Indian History", in *Realm and Region in Traditional India*, ed. R.G. Fox (New Delhi 1977), pp. 3-51; see also Subrahmanyam, "Aspects of State Formation".

Kertāgama contains a detailed description of this compound and the surrounding *nagara*, that is, the capital of Majapahit. The Nāgara Kertāgama again pays special attention to the residences of all the principal ministers and the princely family members whom we have already met in their own *nagara*. According to their status, their residences were distributed in a clear hierarchical order around the royal *pura* or kraton, adjacent to temples, monasteries, markets, and places of the commoners. The Nawanatya, a most-likely much later text, contains a nice definition of the *nagara*. "What is called nagara? All where one can go out (of his house) without passing through paddy fields."[64] Archaeological surveys at present-day Trowulan and literary evidence confirm that Majapahit was a truly urban settlement, in fact the earliest in Java so far known both from archaeological and literary sources.

In regard to the spatial concept of statehood the Nāgara-Kertāgama and an inscription of 1323 C.E. from Tuhañaru contains an interesting piece of information.[65] In this inscription the kingdom (*rājya*) of Majapahits is compared with a temple (*prasāda*) in which the king is worshipped as an incarnation (*avatāra*) of Viṣṇu. The *maṇḍala* of the island (*dvīpa*) of Jawa is equated with the temple land (*punpunan*) whereas the island (*nūṣa*) of Madhura, Tañjunpura, etc. are compared with *aṃśa* land or dependencies which were only partly (*aṃśa*) under the control of Majapahit. The interesting point is the fact that this inscription clearly distinguishes between the *rājya* Majapahit and the (surrounding) *maṇḍala* of Jawadvīpa. It therefore appears that only the core region, comprising the kraton, the capital, and the *nagara* of the princes, constituted the *rājya* of Majapahit. We are used to translating this term as "kingship" or "kingdom" as in the literal sense it means "belonging to the king". Therefore it should be no surprise that in the context of South and Southeast Asian concentric states, *rājya* actually referred only to the inner core region under the direct authority of the *rājā*.

Beyond this *rājya* of Majapahit in eastern Java was *bhūmi* (or *dvīpa*) *jawā*, which, for the first time in its history, has come under

---

[64] Nawanatya, 9a, in Pigeaud, *Java in the 14th Century*, vol. III, p. 121.

[65] Boechari, "Epigraphic Evidence on Kingship in Ancient Java", *Madjalah Ilmu-Ilmu Sastra Indonesia*, 5, 1 (1973): 119-26.

the hegemony of a single dynasty. No sources, however, are available that would allow us to infer that here in *Jawadvīpa-Maṇḍala*, too, members of the central dynasty or court have been imposed "from above" as local rulers. Outside the *rājya* of Majapahit, *bhūmi jawā* apparently was still under the *watek* of its autonomous local *raka*. Moreover we have no idea as to whether Majapahit was able to establish any sort of provincial administration in these autonomous *watek* of *bhūmi jawā* outside the *rājya* of Majapahit and to collect regular taxes in these regions. But militarily, Java was certainly fully under the control of Majapahit. Furthermore, we may assume that military expeditions and visiting officers of the central court had to be supplied by local authorities.

Beyon *bhūmi jawā* were the "other islands" (*nusāntara* or *dvīpāntara*). The Nāgara-Kertāgama, 13-16, contains a long list of these islands, which include most of present-day Indonesia's islands as well as parts of the Malay peninsula. Most important among these islands was Sumatra with Malayu, the successor state of Palembang/Śrīvijaya. It was the only polity on these outer islands to which the Nāgara-Kertāgama concedes the important term *bhūmi*. This reminds us of the fact that in Śrīvijaya's early inscriptions, too, the term *bhūmi* was reserved for Śrīvijaya and Java. The outer islands were regarded as tributary states of Majapahit. The Nāgara-Kertāgama claims that "already the other islands (*dvīpāntara*) are getting ready to show obedience to the Illustrious Prince, without exception they bring in order all kinds of products every ordained season. As an instance of the honoured Prabhu's [King's] exertion for all the good that is in his care, ecclesiastical officers (*bhujaṅga*) and mandarins (*mantri*) are sent to fetch the produce regularly."[66]

The last concentric circle of Majapahit's statehood was constituted by the "other countries" (*desāntara*). According to the Nāgara-Kertāgama, Siam, Ayuthaya, Ligor, Martaban, Rajburi, Singhanagarī (= Satingpra), Campā, and Kamboja belonged to this category; Yavana (= Vietnam) "is different, it is a friend (*mitra*)."[67] The *deśāntara* countries most likely were identical with "all the *maṇḍalita rāṣṭṛa* (which are) looking for support, numerous, entering into

---

[66] Nāgara-Kertāgama, 15,3.

[67] Ibid., 15,1.

the Presence."[68] This description obviously refers to mere diplomatic relations between these countries and Majapahit.

The imperial kingdom of Majapahit thus represents the final stage of a continuous process of state formation in pre-modern Indonesia. The state consisted of a series of concentric circles of authority. Its political control was strongest in its center, that is, the *rājya* of Majapahit. It decreased stepwise in *bhūmi jawā* and the *nusāntara* and ended up in mere diplomatic relations with the *maṇḍalita rāṣṭra* or the "other countries" (*deśāntara*) on Mainland Southeast Asia.

Despite the structural weakness of all pre-modern states of South and Southeast Asia, viz., the lack of actual political control outside the royal core region (*rājya*), under Majapahit two decisive structural changes had taken place. First, it was able to annex completely the neighboring kingdoms and little chieftaincies which usually still had surrounded the *Stammland* of the "Early Kingdoms" as autonomous *watek* or *sāmantacakra*. Majapahit thus created a considerably extended core region (*rājya*). Second, Majapahit succeeded in extending its uncontested hegemony over Java, to enforce tributary relations with a large number of outer islands and to establish diplomatic relations with kingdoms in Mainland Southeast Asia. Majapahit thus became Indonesia's first truly "Imperial Kingdom".

The concentric structure of the "empire" of Majapahit has indeed a strong resemblance to the conceptual model of the *maṇḍala* state as described by O.W. Wolters and more recently by C. Higham in the context of Mainland Southeast Asia.[69] Derived from the ancient Indian Arthaśāstra this concept is very suggestive and thus may be applied even more frequently to the pre-modern state in Southeast Asia. But while employing it in this context, one has to keep in mind that we have very little evidence that the term *maṇḍala* was ever used in contemporary Southeast Asian sources in such a comprehensive way. As we have observed in the early Malay inscriptions of Śrīvijaya and in the Nāgara-Kertāgama, the political connotation of *maṇḍala* always referred to a portion rather

---

[68] Ibid., 12,6.

[69] See above note 2.

than to state as a whole. Particularly in the context of early kingdoms it denoted autonomous or semi-autonomous chieftaincies and principalities at the periphery of these states. As they were slowly integrated some of the *maṇḍala* became provinces of the imperial kingdoms. In this later context, particularly in some of the great regional or imperial kingdoms of India (e.g. the Cōḷas in south India and the Gaṅgas in eastern India),[70] the term *maṇḍala* was also used for provinces in the extended central core region. In order to avoid terminological misunderstandings, we have, therefore, to distinguish clearly between the ancient Indian concept of a *maṇḍala* state system and the - rather different - medieval epigraphical meaning of the term *maṇḍala*, denoting peripheral principalities or provinces. Moreover, as shown elsewhere, "the *maṇḍala* concept does not give sufficient scope to structural changes which constitute the difference between the Early and the Imperial Kingdoms".[71]

---

[70] R. Subbarayalu, "The Cōḷa State", *Studies in History* (New Delhi) 4 (1982): 265-306; S.K. Panda, *Herrschaft und Verwaltung im östlichen Indien unter den späten Gangas* (ca. 1030-1434) (Wiesbaden 1986).

[71] See chapter 14.

THE DEVARĀJA CULT
Legitimation and Apotheosis of the Ruler in the Kingdom of Angkor[1]

I. Preliminary Remarks

We would probably not go far wrong if we described the *devarāja* cult as the most widely discussed state cult of the Hindu middle ages in Southeast Asia. In Cambodia, the country where it acquired its distinctive hallmark, the *devarāja* has become a synonym for the divinized "god-king." In the cult of this divinized kingship, it is believed that we have found the essential "source of inspiration for the great monuments of Angkor,"[2] and that we see "the fundamental unifying element in the ancient Khmer society"[3] of the ninth to thirteenth centuries A.D.

The quest for the origins and ramifications of this cult reveals a web of connections spreading out widely across south, southeast and east Asia. In the voluminous literature concerning the *devarāja* cult we find indications of influences stemming from India,[4]

---

[1] I am most grateful to Dr. I. W. Mabbett who has given so generously of his time and his own great knowledge in the field of Cambodian studies to translate the article.

[2] G. Coedès, 1952, "Le culte de la royauté divinisée, source d'inspiration des grands monuments du Cambodge ancien", in: *Série Orientale Roma*, V, 1, pp. 1-23. Institutio Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, Roma; idem, 1952, "The Cult of the Deified Royalty. Source of Inspiration of the Great Monuments of Angkor", in: *Art and Letters: India, Pakistan and Ceylon*, XXVI, 1, pp.51-53.

[3] K. O'Sullivan, 1962, "Concentric Conformity in Ancient Khmer Kinship Organitation", in: *Bulletin of the Institute of Ethnology* (Academia Sinica, Taipei), 13, pp. 87-96.

[4] K.A.N. Sastri, 1957, *The Cult of Devarāja in Kambuja*. Transactions of the Archaeological Society of South India; R.C. Majumdar, 1963, *Hindu Colonies in the Far East*. 2nd ed. Calcutta, p.189; B.R. Chatterji, 1964, *Indian Cultural Influence in Cambodia*. 2nd rev. ed. Calcutta, p.226; J. Filliozat, 1966, "New Researches on the Relations between India and Cambodia", in: *Indica* (Heras Institute, Bombay), III, pp.95-106.

China,[5] Yunan,[6] Chenla,[7] Champa,[8] and Indonesia,[9] and from the megalithic culture of the whole region as well.[10] Furthermore, with respect to the world mountain motif, the cult has been linked to the ziggurat in the Near East.[11] The ramifications of the *devarāja* cult in Indonesia[12] and (especially in the Ayudhya period) Thailand[13] have been pointed out. The influences of this originally Śaivite cult have been discovered in Cambodia, no less in the Vaishnavite temple of Angkor Wat than in the Mahayāna Buddhist temple of the Bayon, where we see the Śaivite *devarāja* cult

---

[5] G. Coedès, 1952 (see footnote 2), pp. 17 ff.; G. Coedès, 1952, pp. 52 f (see footnote 2).

[6] L.P. Briggs, 1951, *The Ancient Khmer Empire*. Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, New Series, vol. 41, pt. 1. Philadelphia, p. 25; G. Coedès, 1968, *The Indianized States of Southeast Asia*, edited by W.F. Vella, Honolulu, p. 36.

[7] G. Coedès, 1970, "Le véritable fondateur du culte de la royauté divine au Cambodge", in: *R.C. Majumdar Felicitation Volume*, edited by H.B. Sarkar. Calcutta, p. 58.

[8] K. Bhattacharya, 1961, *Les religions brahmaniques dans l'ancien Cambodge*, p. 21, Paris; L.P. Briggs, 1951 (see footnote 6), pp. 15, 38, 44.

[9] B.P. Groslier, 1960, *Hinterindien. Kunst im Schmelztiegel der Rassen*, p. 109; G. Coedès, 1968 (see footnote 6), p. 100; H. Stierlin, 1970, *Angkor*, München, p.14.

[10] H.G.Q. Wales, 1953, *The Mountain of God*, London, p.167; H.G.Q. Wales, 1957, *Prehistory and Religion of Southeast Asia*, London, p. 128, note 1.

[11] R. Heine-Geldern, 1930, "Weltbild und Bauform in Südostasien", in: *Wiener Beiträge zur Kunst und Kulturgeschichte Asiens*, IV, pp. 75 ff.; K. Bhattacharya, 1961 (see footnote 8), pp. 23 f.

[12] G. Coedès, 1934, "On the Origin of the Sailendras of Indonesia", in: *Journal of the Greater India Society*, I, pp. 61-70; G. Coedès, 1968 (see footnote 6), pp. 88 f.; B.P. Groslier, 1960 (see footnote 9), pp. 96 f.

[13] H.G.Q. Wales, 1931, *Siamese State Ceremonies. Their History and Function*, London, p. 60; P. Dhani, 1954, "The Old Siamese Conception of the Monarchy", in: *The Siam Society Fiftieth Anniversary*, II, p. 171; G. Coedès, 1967, *The Making of Southeast Asia*, pp. 146 f. Translation of *Les peuples de la péninsule indochinoise*. 2nd ed. London; H. Bechert, 1967, *Buddhismus, Staat und Gesellschaft in den Ländern des Theravāda Buddhismus*, Vol. II, *Birma, Kambodscha, Laos, Thailand*, Wiesbaden, p. 222.

reincarnated variously in a *Viṣṇurāja* and a *Buddharāja*.[14] We also have numerous evidences of the continued efficacy of the influences of this cult down to the present time. Thus, the life-size statue of a standing Buddha in the central (Theravada Buddhist) temple of Wat Preah Koh in Phnom Penh could represent "in reality" the idealized statue of the Cambodian king Norodom (1859-1904 A.D.), a statue which Coedès considers to be closely associated with the statues of the "Lord of the World" (*kamrateṅ jagat*) in the temples of Angkor.[15] Even Sihanouk's "Buddhist socialism" exhibits belated Buddhist vestiges of the *devarāja* cult.[16]

For all that the *devarāja* cult is accorded a dominant importance in numerous studies of the history of Cambodia and Southeast Asia. Yet, as pointed out by I.W. Mabbett, this role stands in striking contrast to the meagre number of assertions[17] that can be made about the cult with any confidence. For example, whereas it had commonly been confidently assumed that the *devarāja-liṅga* embodied the divine essence of the kings of Ankor, or even represented the kings themselves, it was possible for J. Filliozat a few years ago to demonstrate convincingly that it is not the kings of Angkor but the Hindu god Śiva (as "king of the gods") that is to be understood by the designation *devarāja*.[18] Filliozat's propositions are of great importance for the whole complex of questions

---

[14] L.P. Briggs, 1951, "The Syncretism of Religions in Southeast Asia, Especially in the Khmer Empire", in: *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, LXXI, pp. 237, 246.

[15] G. Coedès, 1966, *Angkor. An Introduction*, p. 33. Translation of *Pour mieux comprendre Angkor*. 2nd impression, Hong Kong.

[16] M.E. Osborne, 1966, "History and Kingship in Contemporary Cambodia", in: *Journal of Southeast Asian History*, VII, pp. 4 ff.; H. Bechert, 1967 (see footnote 13), pp. 253 ff.

[17] I.W. Mabbett, 1969, "Devarāja", in: *Journal of Southeast Asian History*, X, p. 204: "The *devarāja* cult is not synonymous with the general practice of king-worship. It is, on the contrary, a specific practice known only from a handful of references in the inscriptions. The meanings of these references have to be conjectured from their contexts, and the association that we may make between the cult so named and other apparent evidences of a cult surrounding the king is not explicit in the sources so much as reasoned out by modern scholars."

[18] J. Filliozat, 1966 (see footnote 4), p. 103; I.W. Mabbett, 1969 (see footnote 17), p. 207.

about the deification of the ruler in the realm of Indian culture, because the *devarāja* serves as a paradigm for the "god-king" in Southeast Asia. However, if the considerations advanced by Filliozat are correct, it follows that one of the propositions essential to the previously accepted theory of the divinization of Angkorian kings as *devarāja* is disproved.[19] It is therefore all the more curious that, so far as I know, no serious attempt has yet been made to take up Filliozat's "challenge" and either refute his claim or else draw the logical implications for the theory of the *devarāja* cult.

However, it is not only Filliozat's research data that call for a renewed examination of earlier theories about the *devarāja* cult. In what follows it will become apparent that there is a whole series of further propositions which do not stand up to critical examination, or at least must be considered as not yet established.[20] There are Angkorian inscriptions from the ninth to the eleventh centuries which have, previously, been adduced as testimony to the significance of the *devarāja* cult. An examination of these has the effect, on the contrary, of raising questions which finally compel us to forsake the picture we had previously formed of the *devarāja* cult. If the propositions to be advanced below should eventually be confirmed, then indeed the *devarāja* rite played a central role in the legitimation of the newly established régime at the beginning of the ninth century, during the sacral foundation ceremony of the Angkorian kingdom. However, in the course of the following centuries (the tenth and eleventh), the significance of the *devarāja* cult as Cambodian state cult was eclipsed by the cult of the royal

---

[19] This conclusion is also important for India in that there, too, we have no historical proof, in the sense of inscriptional evidence, of a genuine divinization of the king going beyond an apotheosis of the ruler, for example in respect of his functional proximity to particular gods. "Historically speaking we have, in ancient India, no evidence at all of the actual worship of the king or of the theoretical advocacy of it" (V.P. Varma, 1959, *Studies in Hindu Political Thought and its Metaphysical Foundations*, p. 237. 2nd ed. Delhi). In this connection see also B.B. Mishra, *Polity in the Agni Purāṇa* (Calcutta, 1965), p. 33: "The divinity of the king is vigorously criticized by Bāna [Kādambarī, *Pūrvabhāga*, para. 107]. Though a brāhmaṇa, he calls it an invention of unscrupulous flatterers of the king. The minister Śukanāsa informs the prince Chandrāpīḍa that the king is made by the flatterers to consider himself to be four-armed Viṣṇu and three-eyed Śiva, and in trying to act like them he becomes an object of public ridicule." (See also note 49.)

[20] In this connection see also I.W. Mabbett, 1969 (see footnote 17), p. 204..

liṅgas (which is to be distinguished from that of the *devarāja*). These were the *liṅgas* which were erected by all great kings up to the eleventh century on the monumental "stepped pyramids" or "temple mountains" that are so characteristic of the architecture of Angkor. It is this Śaivite cult of the royal *liṅgas* on the temple mountains of Angkor, and not the *devarāja*, which we reencounter later in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, in the form of a Vaiṣṇavite and Buddhist syncretism in Angkor Wat and in the Bayon. The reason why the striking decline in the importance of the *devarāja* has not previously been recognized may, perhaps, be attributed to the fact that, hitherto, the royal *liṅgas* on the temple mountains of Angkor have invariably been seen as *devarājas*. Hence it is one of the preeminent concerns of the following discussion to demonstrate that this conception of the identity of the *devarāja* with the royal *liṅgas* is not tenable.

But this could have far-reaching implications for the whole legitimating system of Angkor. In relation to the content and ideology of this system, it will in future no longer be possible to treat the *devarāja* as the kingpin of the royal *liṅga* cult that was crucial to the legitimation of Angkorian rulers. In the same way, it could no longer be appropriate to characterize the *devarāja* cult with the help of the inscriptions which describe the disposition of these same *liṅgas* on the temple mountains. The most important consequence for the question of legitimation in the Angkorian kingdom could, however, be the recognition that there was no cult for the divinization of the king as "god-king", a recognition which could certainly be of significance for the whole complex of problems concerning the Indian influence in Southeast Asia. In connection with the social aspects of this legitimating system it will be necessary to give new thought to the function and significance of the family of the foundation priest Śivakaivalya. This family, among other things on account of its centuries-long monopolistic status in the *devarāja* cult, has been labelled as the most important priestly family in Southeast Asia and as Angkor's "shadow dynasty". This high valuation of the family of Śivakaivalya is derived in part from their position in the *devarāja* cult and from the supposition that this cult was at the same time the important cult of the royal *liṅgas* on the temple mountains of Angkor. Yet if it should turn out that, once the inauguration of the empire had been

enacted, the *devarāja* was only one of various regalia of royal might in the Angkorian kingdom, can this assessment of the Śivakaivalya family be sustained in its entirety?[21]

II. Previous Theories

Before we turn to the examination of the epigraphic sources, some of the previous theories about the *devarāja* cult should be briefly outlined. Deliberately no attempt at exhaustiveness is made here, as a number of recently published works have reviewed the discussion of the *devarāja* cult in its several phases.[22]

It is George Coedès, without any question, who is to be credited with the most thorough investigation of the *devarāja* cult and who produced the contributions which were essential for the working out of the theory. Since his "Note sur l'apothéose en Cambodge", which appeared in 1911, the problem of interpreting the *devarāja* cult runs like a red thread through his monumental work. Even after his death, there appeared in the R.C. Majumdar Felicitation Volume of 1970 his important contribution on Jayavarman IV (921/28-941 A.D.) as "le véritable fondateur du culte de la royauté divine au Cambodge", in which he substantially enlarged our knowledge of the *devarāja* cult. Probably the best known synthesis of his research findings is to be found in his masterly introduction to the world of Angkor, "Pour mieux comprendre Angkor."[23] In the section on "personal cults"[24] Coedès brings together the results of the researches which he had presented in various articles, and

---

[21] The answer to this question must wait on a later study. Here it may simply be remarked that the Sdok Kak Thoṃ inscription reports in only one instance that a member of this family also consecrated a royal *liṅga*.

[22] J. Filliozat, 1966 (see footnote 4); I.W. Mabbett, 1969 (see footnote 17); H. de Mestier du Bourg, 1968/69, "A propos du culte du Dieu-Roi (devarāja) au Cambodge. En hommage au professor George Coedès", in: *Cahiers d'Histoire Mondiale*, XI, pp. 499-516.

[23] The version cited below is the English translation (G. Coedès, 1966 [see footnote 15]). On the organization of the *devarāja* cult see G. Coedès/P. Dupont, 1943/1946, "L'inscription de Sdok Kak Thoṃ", in: *BEFEO*, XLIII, pp. 65-68.

[24] G. Coedès, 1966 (see footnote 15), pp. 22 f.

which in the following sections were to be investigated in even greater detail.

In the Cambodian cult of the *devarāja* or "god-king", according to Coedès, one propensity of Śaivism came to be more conspicuous than in India, its country of origin, and developed into the cult of the kingdom. The "essence" of the reigning king, his "subtle, inner self" (*sūkṣmāntarātman*), was located in a *liṅga* on a temple mountain which stood in the exact centre of the capital of the empire and thus in the centre of the cosmos. The supernatural *liṅga*, the phallic symbol of the god Śiva, was generated directly by Śiva and was received by a brahman who passed it on to the first king of the Angkor dynasty. This solemn foundation of the *devarāja* cult[25] took place at the beginning of the ninth century under Jayavarman II on Mount Mahendraparvata,[26] the present-day P̥hnoṃ Kulen in the northeast of Angkor. According to Coedès it is further known that Indravarman, a successor of Jayavarman, established the *liṅga* Indreśvara on the Bakoṅ at Roluos (= Hariharālaya) for the cult of the *devarāja*, and that shortly before 900 A.D. Yaśovarman, the founder of Angkor, consecrated the *liṅga* Yaśodhareśvara for the *devarāja* cult on the first central mount of Angkor, the Bakheṅ. Then, in the year 921 A.D., King Jayavarman IV moved the *devarāja* to his temporary new capital Koḥ Ker, where it was honored on the Prasat Thoṃ

---

[25] This ceremony on Mahendraparvata seems to have been preceded, in the injunction of Jayavarman II, by an "auspicious magic rite" (*kalyānasiddhi*) in the south of Cambodia, at Ba Phnom, "destinée à empêcher que le Kambujadeśa ne pût être pris par Javā" ["intended to prevent Cambodia from being annexed by Java"]. Inscription of Vat Samroṅ (K.956), lines 15-16 (*IC*, VII, p. 133). In this connection see also C. Jacques, 1972, "Etudes d'épigraphie cambodgienne. VIII. La carrière de Jayavarman II", in: *BEFEO*, LIX p. 212, and O.W. Wolters, 1973, "Jayavarman II's Military Power: The Territorial Foundation of the Angkorian Empire", in: *JRAS*, I, p. 22.

[26] The chronology of Jayavarman II's reign, most generally accepted at the time 802-850 A.D., has been a subject of continuing keen dispute (on this see R.C. Majumdar, 1943, "The Date of Accession of Jayavarman II", in: *Journal of the Greater India Society*, X, pp. 52 ff.; L.P. Briggs, 1951 [see footnote 6], p. 81; P. Dupont, 1952, "Les débuts de la royauté angkorienne", in: *BEFEO*, XLVI, 1, pp. 157 ff.). Very recently there have appeared almost at the same time two more articles which review the whole range of problems once again (C. Jacques, 1972; O.W. Wolters, 1973 [see footnote 25]). The most difficult problem is the question whether the year 802 A.D. represents the date of Jayavarman's coronation or that of a later consecration of the *devarāja* cult on Mahendraparvata.

under the name *kamrateṅ jagat ta rājya* as "Lord of the world who is royalty". After the reversion of the capital to Angkor the *devarāja* was, at the beginning of the eleventh century, consecrated on the temple mountain Phimeanakas that was built specially for the purpose in the Angkorian palace precincts. Towards the end of the eleventh century, Udayādityavarman constructed the Baphuon in order to embody the "inner self" of the king in a golden *liṅga* and was worshipped at the Bayon as "Jayabuddha", in a statue of the Buddha - a statue in which Jayavarman VII, the builder of the Bayon, was divinized.[27] "From all this evidence it is safe to say that *it was the king who was the great god of ancient Cambodia*, the one to whom the biggest groups of monuments and all the temples in the form of mountains were dedicated."[28] Thus, according to Coedès, the cult of the *devarāja* was founded by Jayavarman II on Mount Mahendra and continued by his successors through the consecration of new *liṅgas*,[29] which commonly bore the names of their respective founding kings. So for Coedès the *devarāja*, the imperial

---

[27] Elsewhere, G. Coedès (1952 [see footnote 2], p. 51) lists altogether thirteen royal temple mountains: Prasat Ak Yoṃ, Krus Prah Aram Roṅ Chen, Bakoṅ, Bakheṅ, Prasat Thoṃ in Koḥ Ker, Baksei Chamkroṅ, the Eastern Mebon, Pre Rup, Ta Keo, Phimeanakas, Baphuon, Angkor Wat, Bayon: "Thus of the thirteen temples enumerated six were certainly dedicated to the royal *liṅga* between the ninth and eleventh century, a seventh, Angkor Vat, became a mausoleum of its founder, and, finally, the last contained a Buddhist image of which the name recalled that of Jayavarman VII. The association of this particular architectural type, the pyramid, with royalty is therefore certain."

[28] G. Coedès, 1966 (see footnote 15), p. 31 (emphasis added). Here, G. Coedès sees the kings as the actual gods of Angkor, whereas in other contexts his argument is more qualified. It is therefore regrettable that this particular passage, whose thesis (as we are attempting to show) is untenable, is all too frequently the authority followed by general works on Southeast Asian history. In this category can perhaps be included Lê Thàn Kôi (1967, *Histoire de l'Asie du sud-est*, p. 36. "Que sais-je?" No. 804. Paris), "Le roi était le Dieu à qui de son vivant le temple était dédié" [The king was the god to whom in his lifetime the temple was dedicated"]; and D.G.E. Hall (1966, *A History of South-East Asia*, p. 99. 2nd ed. London), "He himself [the king as *devarāja*] was the god to whom in his own lifetime the temple was dedicated." H. Stierlin (1970 [see footnote 9], p. 22) even goes a step further when he writes, "As he [the ruler of Angkor] was the king of the gods, he was also the king of men."

[29] G. Coedès, 1952 (see footnote 2), p. 52: "The royal essence was identified for each reign with the subtle ego of the reigning king, and ... the *devarāja*, unique when considered as a philosophical and religious conception implying the existence of an image of the abstract king, was in reality multiple, each reign having its own."

palladium of Angkor, is identical with the current personal *liṅgas* on the temple mountains. On the other hand, as Coedès says in other places,[30] it remains unclear whether the *devarāja-liṅga* of these temple mountains was regularly one and the same cult object or whether on the accession of a new king a new cult object was regularly consecrated. According to Coedès, moreover, the "inner self" of the kings of Angkor was located in the *devarāja-liṅga* on the temple mountains of Angkor. To these kings, as "god-kings" (*deva-rāja*) were the great temples of Angkor dedicated.

In the above mentioned, posthumously published article on Jayavarman IV (921/941 A.D.) as "the veritable founder of the cult of divine kingship in Angkor", Coedès brings together a series of arguments which he had already advanced in various places.[31] They represent an important supplement to the earlier discussion. Starting from the fact that the *liṅgas* on the central temple mountains of the ninth century are known only by the names of their builders (Indreśvara on the Bakoṅ at Roluos and Yaśodhareśvara on the Bakheṅ), Coedès expresses legitimate doubt whether the royal *liṅgas* of the ninth century were yet called *devarāja* (or, in Khmer, *kamrateṅ jagat ta rāja*). Certain so far is only that both expressions occur for the first time in the famous inscription of Sdok Kak Thoṃ in the year 1052 A.D. However, as the kings Bhavavarman, Īśānavarman and Puṣkarākṣa in the pre-Angkorian period of Chenla (sixth to ninth centuries) had previously erected *liṅgas* under their own names (Bhaveśvara, Iśāneśvara and Puṣkareśvara), this would necessarily leave as the sole demonstrable innovation of the Cambodian rulers of the ninth century the idea of consecrating the royal *liṅga* on a stepped pyramid in the centre of their capitals.

---

[30] G. Coedès, 1968 (see footnote 6), p. 119: "We do not know whether this [*devarāja*] *liṅga* that contained the 'royal essence', the 'moi subtil' of the king remained the same *liṅga* throughout the successive reigns or whether, on the other hand, each of the various *liṅgas* consecrated by the kings upon their accession and bearing their names (Indreśvara, Yasodhareśvara, Rajendreśvara) was in turn the Devarāja."

[31] G. Coedès, 1931, "Etudes Cambodgiennes XXVI. La date de Koḥ Ker", in: *BEFEO*, XXXI, pp. 12-18; idem, 1952 (see footnote 2); idem, 1961: "Les expression vraḥ kamrateṅ añ et kamrateṅ jagat en vieux-khmèr", in: *The Adyar Library Bulletin*, XXV, pp. 447-60; and *IC*, I (1937), pp. 70 f.

According to Coedès, the decisive step to the divinization of king and the kingship in the *devarāja* cult presumably did not happen until Jayavarman IV. As a usurper, he transferred his capital to Chok Gargyar, the present-day Koḥ Ker, about eighty kilometers to the northeast of Angkor. There he constructed the Prasat Thoṃ, the highest Cambodian temple mountain built to that time. Yet he did not name the *liṅga* of this temple after himself as his predecessors had done, but instead he dedicated it to Tribhuvaneśvara, the "lord of the three worlds", a familiar name of Śiva. The Khmer inscriptions at Koḥ Ker praise the god, first of all, as "the divine lord who is lordship" (*vraḥ kamrateṅ jagat ta rājya*).[32] In his discussions Coedès accords special significance to the Sanskrit expression *rājya* (kingdom, royalty, lordship) in the Khmer name of the *liṅga*. In contrast to the Khmer name of the *devarāja* in the later Sdok Kak Thoṃ inscription, *kamrateṅ jagat ta rāja* ("the lord of the world, who is king"), here at Koḥ Ker it is called *kamrateṅ jagat ta rājya* ("lord of the world, who is lordship"). According to Coedès, the rule of Jayavarman IV is thus divinized, with the name Tribhuvaneśvara, as "lord of the three worlds". While Jayavarman II, as *cakravartin* at the beginning of the ninth century, aspired after unlimited dominion over the earth, Jayavarman IV a century later went a step further: "Sa fondation du liṅga Tribhuvaneśvara, 'Seigneur des trois mondes' qui est le *rājya*, doit lui assurer une sorte de souveraineté cosmique, identifiant la royauté khmère à la maîtrise des trois mondes qui constituent l'univers."[33] Coedès then sets out which successors of Jayavarman IV followed his innovation in their inscriptions and, similarly, which kings again resumed the tradition of his predecessors and, in the *liṅgas* of their temple mountains, conjoined their own names to that of Śiva (*īśvara*).

In consideration of the fact that the name *kamrateṅ jagat ta rājya,* which was to reappear in the Sdok Kak Thoṃ inscription in the form *kamrateṅ jagat ta rāja*, is first documented in the inscriptions

---

[32] This name appears with several variations: *vraḥ kamrateṅ añ ta rājya; vraḥ kamrateṅ an jagat ta rājya* and *vraḥ kamrateṅ jagat ta rājya. Vraḥ* is here equivalent to "holy, exalted", and as substantive significantly "temple", "king", and "god"; *kamrateṅ* = Lord; *jagat* (Sanskrit) = "world"; *añ* = "my"; *ta* = relative pronoun; *rājya* (Sanskrit) = "kingship", "kingdom", "sovereignty".

[33] G. Coedès, 1970 (see footnote 7), p. 60.

of Jayavarman IV, we must agree with Coedès that Jayavarman IV is the veritable founder of the divinization of kingship in Cambodia.[34] It will be shown below, however, that the transformation under Jayavarman IV could have taken a basically different course, than Coedès appreciated.[35]

Coedès developed his views about the *devarāja* cult over the course of almost sixty years. During this time, the reflections of his colleagues in the Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient also drew him into earnest debate.[36] In this connection the studies of L. Finot and Ph. Stern should particularly be mentioned; they advanced, against Coedès, the contention that the *devarāja* was a "roi abstrait" (Finot), or, again, "plus un rituel qu'un symbole matérialisé" (Stern). The discussion was pursued by Coedès with almost the same involvement as his famous debate with J. Przyluski over the question whether Angkor Wat was a Vaiṣṇavite temple or a mausoleum for its royal builder Sūryavarman II (1113-ca. 1150 A.D.).[37] However, whereas the latter discussion was more or less settled by an agreement that Angkor Wat was a Vaiṣṇavite mausoleum for Sūryavarman II deified as Paramaviṣṇuloka, the discussion between Coedès, Stern and Finot led to no definitive explanation

---

[34] The discussion of the divinization of the king is here deliberately confined to the epigraphically attested royal cult in Hindu Angkor. The question of royal cults in Southeast Asia in megalithic times, in which for example Quaritch Wales sees the essential foundations of the *devarāja* cult, is not taken into consideration here. "It is when we compare the peculiarities of the Khmer religion with the Older Megalithic beliefs in South-East Asia, that the similarity of concepts is so striking that there seems little doubt as to the direction in which to look for the cause of the distinctive Khmer traits" (H.G. Quaritch Wales, 1961, *The Making of Greater India*, p. 128. 2nd enlarged ed. London).

[35] See below the conclusions.

[36] Summaries of this discussion are to be found in G. Coedès, 1952 (see footnote 2), and H. de Mestier du Bourg 1968/69 (see footnote 22).

[37] J. Przyluski, "Pradakṣiṇa et Prasavya en Indochine", in: *Winternitz-Festschrift* (Leipzig, 1933), pp. 326-32; idem, "Is Angkor Vat a Temple or a Tomb", in: in: *JISOA*, V (1937), pp. 131-44; G. Coedès, "Angkor Vat, temple ou tombe", in: *BEFEO*, XXXIII (1933, pp. 303-9; idem, "Etudes cambodgiennes XXXIII: La destination funéraire des grands monuments Khmèrs", in: *BEFEO*, XL (1940), pp. 315-43; idem, "Le grands monuments d'Angkor, sont-ils des temples ou des tombeaux?" in: *Cahiers de l'Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient,* XXVI (1941), pp. 26-29.

of the nature of the *devarāja* cult. The reason for this may lie, as will be shown in the following sections, in the conflicting interpretations of the epigraphic data, especially those of the Sdok Kak Thoṃ inscription. Today, Coedès' contentions about the *devarāja* cult are generally accepted, and those of his opponents are mentioned almost only in footnotes,[38] but the reputation which Coedès' life work has justly earned should not close the door to a reexamination of his arguments.

Finot writes of the *devarāja* cult: "Ce roi, ainsi élevé aux honneurs de l'apothéose, n'est pas le roi fondateur, car dans ce cas, l'idole eût reçu, selon la règle, son nom, et elle fût restée dans son temple sans suivre le roi régnant dans toutes ses résidences. Le *devarāja* est le roi abstrait, dans sa nature surhumaine, l'essence royale confondue avec l'essence divine sous l'apparence du *liṅga*. C'est pourquoi il accompagne partout le roi régnant qui est comme l'émaṇation changeante de sa substance immuable et re saurait se séparer de lui."[39] Hence, Finot seems to distinguish between the *liṅga* of the king (such as Indreśvara) and the *devarāja*. The former, in obedience to the rules of Hinduism, was a fixture in a temple and thus could not follow the king to his various residences. The *devarāja*, on the other hand, was the "abstract king", which was united, as the ruler's supernatural essence, with the divine in a *liṅga*. In this immaterial form the *devarāja* followed the kings of Cambodia to their various capitals.

According to Coedès, Finot was thus defending the idea of an "idole unique", against which he maintained that previously the search in Angkor for a temple which could have been the shrine of a "permanent" *devarāja* sculpture had been in vain. As evidence in refutation of the idea of the "idole unique" Coedès then adduces the Tribhuvaneśvara-*liṅga*, which for him was the *devarāja* of king Jayavarman IV in Koḥ Ker. It would be highly improbable that the potent Tribhuvaneśvara *liṅga* should have been "carried off" by Jayavarman IV from Angkor to Koḥ Ker, only to be subsequently

---

[38] Exceptions in this respect are H. de Mestier du Bourg, 1968/69 (see footnote 22), and S. Sahai, 1970, *Les institutions politiques et l'organisation administrative du Cambodge ancien*, Paris, pp. 41 ff.

[39] Cited by G. Coedès, 1952 (see footnote 2), p. 12.

transported back to Angkor again in the reigns of his successors. On the contrary, according to Coedès, the *liṅga* of Koḥ Ker is the preeminent example of a royal *liṅga* that was consecrated for a particular king and for a particular temple. So, if inscriptions mention kings taking the *devarāja* with them when they change capitals, this must in Coedès's view be understood as referring to the cult and ritual, but not as denoting the *devarāja* sculpture.[40] Coedès then seeks to trace the whole idea of the "idole unique" back to a misinterpretation of the Sdok Kak Thoṃ inscription, "qui, loin de parler comme on l'a cru d'une seule et même image 'residant dans toute capitale où les rois le conduisirent', dit textuellement: 'Quelle que soit la capitale où les rois sont allés résider, *les divers rois-dieux* y ont été emmenés aussi.'"[41] We must agree with Coedès that this interpretation rules out the notion of an "idole unique." Still, the question remains open whether the interpretation of the text which Coedès offers here in his debate with Finot is tenable.

To begin with, it is enough here to point to the striking fact that Coedès (in collaboration with Dupont) translates the corresponding part of the Sdok Kak Thoṃ inscription in exactly the sense understood by Finot: "*Le dieu-roi* changea de résidence suivant les capitales où le monarque le conduisit ..."[42]

In 1934 Philippe Stern put together his views on the *devarāja* cult in his important article, "Le temple-montagne khmèr. Le culte du

---

[40] G. Coedès, 1952 (see footnote 2), p. 13: "Et quand les textes nous disent que tel roi changeant de capitale emmena avec lui le *devarāja* il faut evidemment comprendre qu'il en transféra le culte, le rituel, et non pas l'idole ellemême." ["And when the texts tell us that such-and-such a king, in changing capital, took with him the *devarāja*, it is evidently necessary to understand that he transferred the cult, the ritual, and not the idol itself."] Here G. Coedès comes very close in his reasoning to Ph. Stern, 1934, "Le temple-montagne khmèr. Le culte du liṅga et le devarāja", in: *BEFEO*, XXXIV, pp. 611-16.

[41] G. Coedès, 1952 (see footnoe 2), p. 14 (emphasis added). ["Which, far from speaking, as has been thought, about a single unique image 'residing in each capital to which the kings conducted it', says, in the context, 'to whatever capital the kings went to take up residence, *the various king-gods* were taken thither also.'"]

[42] G. Coedès et P. Dupont, 1943/46 (see footnote 23), p. 110 (emphasis added). ["The *god-king* changed its residence according as the monarch conducted it to different capitals ..."]

liṅga et le *devarāja*." After enumerating the great temples of Angkor and arranging them chronologically, Stern counts up the Angkorian temple *liṅgas* whose names are known to us. We have the Indreśvara of the Bakoṅ, the Yaśodhareśvara of the Bakheṅ, the Rājendreśvara of the East Mebon, and the Rājendrabhadreśvara of Pre Rup. Further, the *liṅga* of Baphuon is worshipped as the "golden *liṅga*" (*suvarṇa-liṅga*). Stern then poses the decisive question of the relationships between these *liṅgas* known by name and the *devarāja*, "ce dieu-roi sous forme du *liṅga*, symbole de la royauté, qui résidait dans chaque capitale?" He seeks to supply the answer in the example of the Yaśodhareśvara-*liṅga* on the Bakheṅ: Stern believes it can be established from the Sdok Kak Thoṃ inscription that, when Yaśodharapura (= Angkor) was founded, the Yaśodhareśvara-*liṅga* was consecrated on the Bakheṅ in the center of Angkor as the *devarāja* of Yaśovarman.[43] However, he warns against the "simple and logical hypothesis" that the erection of every temple mountain in Angkor coincides with the accession of a new king and the dedication of a new *liṅga* as *devarāja*. "The reality is, on the contrary, more flexible and less logical." As evidence against this same "simple and logical hypothesis", Stern adduces the East Mebon and Pre Rup, both of which were built by Rājendravarman II (944-968). These examples demonstrate that a king could have built, one after the other, *two* temple mountains for two *liṅgas* named after him, Rājendreśvara (952 A.D.) and Rājendrabhadreśvara (961 A.D.). These two temple mountains of one and the same king contradict the proposition that every king built *one* temple for his royal *devarāja-liṅga*.[44]

The difficulties which are bound to arise if one attempts to demonstrate the connections, and also the distinctions, between the *devarāja* and the *liṅgas* of the Angkorian temple mountains can only be obviated, according to Stern, by the proposition that the

---

[43] Ph. Stern, 1934 (see footnote 40), p. 613. It will be shown below that this identification of the Yaśodhareśvara with the *devarāja* in the Sdok Kak Thoṃ inscription is, specifically, *not* admissible.

[44] G. Coedès (1952 [see footnote 2], p. 51) included the Mebon and the Pre Rup in a list of the royal temple mountains of Cambodia. It is not clear why, in a similar list ("Angkor. Die Hauptstadt des alten Kambodscha - ein Abbild des Kosmos", in: *Saeculum*, VI, 1955, p. 158), he did not mention the Mebon temple mountain.

devarāja was a "movable cult". This cult, says Stern, could be celebrated as a rule (among other occasions) when a new royal temple was consecrated. Hence Stern is inclined to see in the *devarāja* rather "a rite than a material symbol".[45] As confirmation of this proposition, Stern adduces the data of the Sdok Kak Thoṃ inscription, which indeed bring the ritual (*siddhividyā, vidhi,* etc.) of the *devarāja* into the foreground. Hence Stern comes to the conclusion that, in the central sanctuaries on the temple mountains of Angkor, there was invariably (or commonly) a *liṅga* which invariably (or commonly) united the name of the reigning monarch with Īśvara, the name of Śiva. In contrast to these royal *liṅgas*, however, the *devarāja* seems to have been the ritual of a cult rather than the cult object of a particular cult in a particular temple. This *devarāja* cult could have been celebrated "around" the royal *liṅga*. In Stern's view this interpretation would explain how and why the cult was celebrated in various temples.[46]

On the views of Finot and Stern it may be said by way of summary that both distinguish at least partially between the *devarāja* and the personal king-*liṅgas*. Finot sees in the *devarāja* the abstract royal essence ("essence royal"), which existed as it were independently of the currently reigning king and independently of his personal *liṅgas* established on the temple mountains. The suprapersonal royal essence was united with the god Śiva in a *liṅga* that was passed down from king to king through the agency of brahmins. Stern, on the other hand, appears to have in mind a *devarāja* ritual independent of the personal *liṅgas* of kings and without any definite temple. This ritual was celebrated in various places, and this could include the temple mountains of the personal *liṅgas* belonging to the kings of Angkor. But Finot and Stern both studiously refrain from indicating, even by so much as a hint, what this "abstract" cult - a cult without definite cult object and without

---

[45] Ph. Stern, 1934 (see footnote 40), p. 614.

[46] Ph. Stern, 1934 (see footnote 40), p. 615: "Quant au *devarāja*, il paraît être un rituel célébré autour d'un *liṅga* au nom royal, plutôt qu'un *liṅga* déterminé ayant son temple particulier. S'il en est ainsi, ce culte a pu être célébré dans des temple différents." ["as for the *devarāja*, it seems to have been a ritual celebrated in the royal name before a *liṅga*, rather than a specific *liṅga* with its own unique temple. If such is the case, this cult could have been celebrated in different temples."]

permanent temple could have looked like. This uncertainty impelled both scholars to revert, in particular cases, to the identification of the *devarāja* with the personal *lingas* of the kings; in doing so they fell back into the circular argument from which they had originally wished to escape.

The most important contribution of recent years, whose implications reveal new avenues to the explanation of the *devarāja* cult, comes, as was mentioned above, from J. Filliozat. On the basis of a series of data from the Tiruvāśagam of the South Indian Śaivite sacred Māṇikka-vāśagar (which Filliozat dates to the ninth century), he is enabled to demonstrate that in South India Śiva was worshipped as "king of the gods" on Mount Mahendra:[47] "So it is unnecessary to suppose peculiar Khmer ideas of the king as god to understand how the *devarāja* was established on the Mahendraparvata in the shape of a *linga*. *Devarāja, meaning 'king of gods', designates Śiva himself,* normally represented by a *linga* and established on the very mountain referred to by Māṇikkavācakar."[48] After taking account of the custom, familiar throughout India, of naming the *linga* of a king with his name in combination with Īśvara (= Śiva),[49] Filliozat comes to the conclusion that "the Khmer

---

[47] "If we now refer to the Tamil Śaivite literature of the time when Jayavarman II first established the *devarāja* on the Mahendraparvata ... we meet with a very simple explanation of all the facts" (J. Filliozat, 1966 [see footnote 4], p. 101). As an example, J. Filliozat cites from the Tiruvāśagam, *inter alia,* "O God of the gods themselves" (XXVIII, 9), or "O King of those who are above" (XXVII, 7). "Taking as his abode the great mountain Mahendra where he established his seat and his glory, there he granted the grace of manifesting the tradition (*āgamaṃ*)" (II, 8-10). The historically most familiar example in India of the worship of Śiva on a Mount Mahendra is Śiva Gokarṇasvāmin (or, Gokarṇeśvara) on the Mahendraparvata (Mahendrācala) as state divinity of the eastern Gangas of the Kalinga kingdom, from about the sixth to the twelfth centuries (see, for example, the Ponnunturu inscription of Sāmantavarman from the mid-sixth century. S.N. Rajaguru, *Inscriptions of Orissa*, II [Bhubaneswar 1960], p. 10).

[48] J. Filliozat, 1966 (see footnote 4), p. 102 (emphasis added).

[49] "So in Cambodia, an Indreśvara, for example, was the Lord of King Indravarman, that is, simply Śiva, the Lord of the Universe, as worshipped by this king in a peculiar place." J. Filliozat, 1966 (see footnote 4), p. 102. In this connection see also J. Duncan M. Derrett, *The Hoysaḷas, a Medieval Royal Family* (Madras, 1957), p. 223: "Without a word of explanation it might be supposed that if the Hoysaḷeśvara, or Linga of Śiva dedicated by the Hoysala, or in the name of the Hoysaḷa, were the product of a

expression *kamrateṅ jagat ta rāja* means simply 'the lord of the World (*jagadīśvara*) who is King', not 'who is the [Khmer] king', having performed the *liṅgasthāpana*."[50]

This brief review of various theories about the *devarāja* cult has served not only to demonstrate in outline the development of the royal cults in Angkor, but also to point to a few of the controversial questions about the nature of the *devarāja* cult, to which we shall now address ourselves. The most important problem is certainly the question raised by Filliozat: who was venerated in Angkor as *devarāja*, Śiva or the Cambodian kings? On the basis of South Indian sources, Filliozat was able to show convincingly that in the *devarāja* the Hindu god Śiva was venerated; but he stopped short of going on to make a more thorough examination of the Cambodian epigraphic sources. We shall revert more than once to the question how far Filliozat's thesis is valid for Angkor as well.

III. The Sdok Kak Thoṃ Inscription and the *Devarāja* Cult

The most important source for the *devarāja* cult is the famous inscription of Sdok Kak Thoṃ from the year 1052 A.D. In it the brahmin Sadāśiva recounts the history of his family, which possessed an uncontested monopoly in the discharge of priestly office pertaining to the *devarāja* cult. The part played by the family of Śivakaivalya in the *devarāja* cult parallels the role which the Sdok Kak Thoṃ inscription plays in our knowledge of the *devarāja* cult. Without the data from this inscription about the foundation

---

figment of the king's own brain, it would be tantamount to an admission that the medieval Indian king was a *'divine king'*. *This, of course, was not the case.* The custom of naming a liṅga either after the person who had the temple built and the consecration performed or a nominee of his ... was indeed not unconnected with vanity, since by this means the donor achieved a kind of immortality." It is obviously one of the gravest errors in the discussion of the *devarāja* cult, and the question of divinization of rulers in general, to perceive in the attempt to achieve salvation in a particular god (perhaps by the erection of a statue of oneself in the likeness of the god, a "portrait sculpture") a process of direct divinization of the one striving after salvation.

[50] J. Filliozat, 1966 (see footnote 4), p. 103 (emphasis added); I.W. Mabbett, 1969, p. 105: "neither this passage, nor any other, says that Jayavarman is a *devarāja*. The term appears as the name of a rite, and should be thought of as such. The occurence of the term alone is not enough to show that anybody identified a king with a god."

of the cult, and the precise enumeration of the various priestly functions of the seven forebears of Sadāśiva, it would not be possible to fit such isolated references to the *devarāja* cult as occur in other inscriptions into any broader pattern. The inscription, which has been edited and translated several times,[51] consists of a Sanskrit part and a Khmer part. About the *devarāja* cult, the Khmer version is substantially more informative. In it is recounted how King Jayavarman II came from Java[52] to Indrapura in Cambodia. There Jayavarman nominated the priest Śivakaivalya as his teacher (*guru*) and court chaplain (*rājapurohita*). After two shifts of capital, to Hariharālaya and Amarendrapura, it was established upon Mahendraparvata (C, 70).

> At that time[53] there came a brahman named Hiraṇyadāma from Janapada, a savant versed in magical science (*siddhi vidyā*). He was invited by His Highness, Paramesvara [posthumous naṃe of Jayavarman], in order to conduct a ceremony (*vidhi*) which should prevent this land of Kambuja from ever being dependent (*āyatta*) on Javā, and to bring about [instead][54] that there should be only one single 'Lord of the lower earth' [= King; Khmer: *kamrateṅ phdai karoṃ*], who would be *Cakravartin* [universal lord]. This brahman conducted the ceremony in accordance with the Vināśikha. He consecrated (*pratiṣṭhā*) the lord of the World, who is king (*kamrateṅ jagat ta rāja* [= Skt: *Devarāja*] (C, 71-74). This brahman taught the holy Vināśikha, Nayottara, Saṃmoha and

---

[51] E. Aymonier, 1901, "La stèle de Sdok Kak Thoṃ", in: *Journal Asiatique*, Ser. 9, XVII, pp. 5-52; L. Finot, 1915, "L'inscription de Sdok Kak Thoṃ", in: *BEFEO*, XV, pp. 53-106; G. Coedès/P. Dupont, 1943/46 (see footnote 23). Where not otherwise specified, the edition of G. Coedès and P. Dupont is cited.

[52] *man vraḥ pāda Parameśvara mok aṃvi Javā pi kuruṅ ni [a]nau nagara Indrapura* (C, 61). According to the recent researches of Professor Boechari, cited by O.W. Wolters as an authority, it is not to be ruled out that the expression *bhūmi Jāva* in the early Śrīvijaya inscription from Kota Kapur (686 A.D.) refers to the extreme south of Sumatra. O.W. Wolters, 1973 (see footnote 25), p. 22, note 8.

[53] Or "In that a brahman came ..." See Appendix under *man*.

[54] See Appendix under *leḥ*.

Śiraścheda [Tantras?],[55] all of which[56] he recited from beginning to end, in order to have them written down and to teach them to Steṅ añ Śivakaivalya. He gave instruction to Steṅ añ Śivakaivalya, so that the latter could perform the ritual (*vidhi*) in the presence of (*nā*) the *kamrateṅ jagat ta rāja* (C, 74-76). His Royal Highness Parameśvara and the brahman Hiraṇyadāma granted a concession and swore an oath, ordaining that the family line of the Steṅ añ Śivakaivalya should officiate in the presence of[57] the *kamrateṅ jagat ta rāja*, forbidding that other people should officiate. Steṅ añ Śivakaivalya, the *purohita*, appointed his whole family to the service of the ritual (C, 76-78). Then His Royal Highness Parameśvara, the king, went back again to be ruler[58] in the royal city of Hariharālaya. His Highness the *kamrateṅ an ta rāja* was conducted (*nāṃ*)[59] back also. Śivakaivalya, together with his whole family, officiated according to the rules (C, 78-79). Steṅ añ Śivakaivalya died during this reign [of Jayavarman]. His Royal Highness Parameśvara went to heaven while [residing] in the city of Hariharālaya (C, 80). The *Kamrateṅ jagat ta rāja* moved from place to place,[60] accompanying the king to the respective capital cities, in order to protect (*caṃ*) the rule (*rājya*) of future kings (*kamrateṅ phdai karoṃ*) (C, 80-82).

Here follows a short description of the activity of the priest Sūkṣmavindu, who was the *purohita* of the *devarāja*, and successor to Śivakaivalya, under King Jayavarman III. With regard to the *devarāja* cult we are told merely: "During the reign of His Royal

---

[55] *vrāhmaṇa noḥ thve vidhi toy vraḥ Vināśikha. pratiṣṭhā kamrateṅ jagat ta rāja. vrāhmaṇa noḥ paryyan vraḥ Vināśikha. Nayottara. Sammoha. Śiraścheda* (C, 73-74). The substantive *pratiṣṭhā*, like *sthāpanā*, is used without a verb. On these texts, see note 73 below.

[56] See Appendix under *man* and *syaṅ*.

[57] See Appendix under *nā*.

[58] See Appendix under *kuruṅ*.

[59] See Appendix under *naṃ*.

[60] See Appendix under *daiy*.

Highness Viṣṇuloka [Jayavarman III], the *kamrateṅ jagat ta rāja* resided in Hariharālaya." Steṅ añ *Sūkṣmavindu* "was *purohita* of the *kamrateṅ jagat ta rāja*. The whole family officiated in the presence of the *kamrateṅ jagat ta rāja*." (C, 82-84)

The following sixty-four lines of the inscription's Khmer text recount, in practically the same terms, the careers of the successors of Śivakaivalya who celebrated the official ritual of the *devarāja* under the various kings of Angkor, up to the priest Sadāśiva in Udayādityavarman II's reign (1050-1066 A.D.).[61] Additional information about the *devarāja* in the Sdok Kak Thoṃ inscription is to be obtained only from the time of Angkor's foundation during Yaśovarman I's reign (889-ca. 910 A.D.), and from the time of Jayavarman IV (921/28-941), who temporarily moved the capital to Chok Gargyar (Koḥ Ker), north of Angkor.

Under Yaśovarman, Vāmaśiva was the tutor of the king, and his "whole family officiated in accordance with the rules in the presence of the *kamrateṅ jagat ta rāja*. When[62] His Royal Highness Paramaśivaloka [Yaśovarman I] founded the city of Srī Yaśodhara-pura he transferred the *kamrateṅ jagat ta rāja* from Hariharālaya to place it in this city[63] (D, 11-12).[64] His Royal Highness Paramaśivaloka then constructed (*sthāpanā*) the central (temple-) mountain

---

[61] Even if Sadāśiva's religious functions were reduced under Sūryavarman (L.P. Briggs, 1951 (see footnote 14), pp. 242 f. and idem, 1952, "The Genealogy and Successors of Śivāchārya. Suppression of the Great Sacerdotal Families by Sūryavarman I", in: *BEFEO*, XLVI, pp. 180 ff.), there is still no question of any weakening of Sadāśiva and his family. The service of the *devarāja* was carried out by his family both under Sūryavarman and under the latter's successor Udayādityavarman (D, 44; D, 64).

[62] See Appendix under *man*.

[63] See Appendix under *naṃ*.

[64] Here I follow the translation of L. Finot (1915 [see footnote 51], p. 89), lines 12 f.).

(*vnāṃ kantāl*).[65] The lord of the Śivāśrama [= Vāmaśiva] erected the sacred *liṅga* in the center." (D, 12-13)[66]

Concerning Jayavarman IV, we learn of "the reign of His Royal Highness Paramaśivapada [Jayavarman IV]; then His Highness left the city of Śrī Yaśodharapura in order to be ruler (*kuruṅ*) in Chok Gargyar. He took with him also the *kamrateṅ jagat ta rāja* [thither]". (D, 31-32) Under Harṣavarman II (941-944 A.D.), the successor of Jayavarman, the *kamrateṅ jagat ta rāja* continued to reside in Chok Garyar. Not until the time of his successor, Rājendravarman II (944-968 A.D.), did the capital move back to Angkor. "Then His Royal Highness Śivaloka (Rājendravarman II) returned again to be ruler in the city of Srī Yaśodharapura, and he conducted the *kamrateṅ jagat ta rāja* back with him. The whole family officiated in the presence of the *kamrateṅ jagat ta rāja* in accordance with the rules." (D, 36-37)

Let us now glance briefly at the Sanskrit part of the inscription, which recounts the solemn inauguration of the *devarāja* cult. Here it is said that Hiraṇyadāma taught the *śāstra* texts *Śiraścheda, Vīnāśikha, Saṃmoha,* and *Nayottara*, "the four faces of Tumburu." "When this brahman, full of zeal, employing his knowledge and experience in occult science, had brought together the essence of the *śāstras*, then, for the increase of the wellbeing of the earth, he performed the success-ensuring [ritual] called *devarāja*."[67] Besides the important designation of the *devarāja* ritual, the Sanskrit version of the Sdok Kak Thoṃ inscription contains little concrete evidence.

---

[65] Bakheṅ = Yaśodharagiri.

[66] In later inscriptions this *liṅga* of Yaśovarman is called "Śrī Yaśodhareśvara"; for example the Bakheṅ inscriptions K. 464 and K. 558, line 6 (C. Jacques, 1970, "Etudes d'épigraphie cambodgienne.IV. Deux inscriptions du Phnom Bakheṅ", in: *BEFEO*, LVII, p. 65).

[67] śāstraṃ śiraścheda-vināśikhākhyaṃ
saṃmohanāmāpi nayottarākhyam (55)
tat tumvuror vaktra-catuṣkam asya
siddhyeva vipras samadarśayat saḥ (56) XXVIII

dvijas sammuddhṛtya śāstra-sāraṃ
rahasya-kauśalyadhiyā sayatnaḥ (57)
siddhīr vvahantīḥ kila devarājā-
bhikhyāṃ vidadhre bhuvana-rddhi-vṛddhyai (58) XXIX

The name *devarāja* crops up only two times more at the end of this family chronicle. There it is said that Śivācārya, the penultimate member of the line of priests from the family of Śivakaivalya, "offered worship (*arcā*) daily, full of zeal and excluding other priests" to the *devarāja* (B, 34), and that Sādāśiva, the last chief of the Śivakaivalyas, honored the *devarāja* (B, 37).

It is significant for our further consideration that, in connection with the founding of Yaśodharapura, the consecration of the *liṅga* upon the Yaśodharagiri (Bakheṅ) is especially stressed, as it is also in the Khmer version of the inscription: Vāmaśiva, the *guru* of Yaśovarman (887-ca. 910 A.D.), "erected a Śiva-*liṅga* on the king's request upon the Śrī Yaśodharagiri, equal in splendour to the King of the Mountain [Meru]" (B, 15). Further, it is said of Īśānamūrti, the *hotar* of Jayavarman IV (921/28-940 A.D.), that, full of devotion (*bhakti*), he honored Tribhuvaneśvara (B, 27) - the *liṅga* that Jayavarman IV caused to be erected on the Prasāt Thoṃ in Koḥ Ker.

In attempting to solve the problems posed by the *devarāja* cult, scholars have sometimes been all too readily tempted too see certain enigmatic allusions to the *devarāja* cult in the Sdok Kak Thoṃ inscription as having an immediate bearing on the archaeological problems of Angkor. Sometimes it seems that a number of the difficulties attending research into the *devarāja* cult can be reduced to a methodological problem. We have been attempting to elucidate the nature of a cult whose existence is known, ultimately, only from an inscription, by using archeological means, and we have even been trying to solve further problems by the same means, before the possibilities of clarifying the problem through the inscription have been completely exhausted.[68] However, as the

---

[68] Certainly, when we think of the size and number of the at first apparently almost insoluble archaeological problems confronted by archaeologists in Angkor, this methodical approach becomes entirely comprehensible. It seemed capable not only of relating the large number of undated Angkorian temple buildings to a chronological sequence, but also of providing a key to the question why this prodigious building activity had been undertaken in Angkor. The constantly repeated references of the Sdok Kak Thoṃ inscription to the priests who carried out the *kamrateṅ jagat ta rāja* rite under the various kings immediately presented themselves as a key to the solution of this problem. It followed from the theory that after their death the temple mountains of Angkor became the mausolea of the men who built them, that the new kings were virtually compelled to erect new temples for "their" *devarājas*.

Sdok Kak Thoṃ inscription is still, as it always has been, the only source which makes any sort of coherent statement about the *devarāja* cult possible, we shall here deliberately follow the opposite path - that is, we shall in the first instance assess the data of the Sdok Kak Thoṃ inscription in their own right. It will be apparent that the analysis of the Sdok Kak Thoṃ inscription yields a relatively clear picture of the *devarāja* in at least three particulars: (1) the *devarāja* is Śiva; (2) it is worshipped in a *movable* cult image, which (3) is not identical with the *liṅgas* of the large temple mountains of Angkor. Hence the temple mountains of Angkor, rich as they are in abundant archaeological and epigraphic indications of their cosmographic significance, are ruled out as sources for the *devarāja* cult in the strict sense. They are, however, of crucial significance for the problem of royal apotheosis in the kingḍom of Angkor in the wider sense.[69]

If we read the Sdok Kak Thoṃ inscription bearing in mind the familiar theory that the *devarāja* was consecrated by the kings from time to time on the temple mountains built by them, it instantly strikes us that, on the contrary, the *kamrateṅ jagat ta rāja* was consecrated, or even solemnly inaugurated (*pratiṣṭhā*), only once, namely under Jayavarman II, on Mahendraparvata.[70] Thereafter, repeating itself almost mechanically, it is said only that, under the supervision of a particular successor Śivakaivalya, the latter's "whole family officiated in the presence of the *kamrateṅ jagat ta*

---

[69] R. Heine-Geldern, 1930 (see footnote 11), pp. 33-45; G. Coedès, 1955 (see footnote 44); J. Filliozat, 1954, "Le symbolisme du monument du Phnoṃ Bakheṅ", in: *BEFEO*, XLIV, pp. 527-54; H. Stierlin, 1970 (see footnote 9), pp. 81 ff. See also P. Mus, 1933, "Barabaḍur. Les origines du stūpa et la transmigration, essai d'archéologie religieuse comparée", in: *BEFEO*, XXXIII, pp. 696-710 and M. Eliade, "Centre du monde, temple, maison", in: *Le symbolisme cosmique des monuments religieux*, Roma 1957, pp. 57-82.

[70] Before the passage translated above (C, 73-74), in which the brahman Hiraṇyadāma performed the consecration, the assertion was made right at the beginning of the Khmer text that "then His Royal Highness Parameśvara consecrated the *kamrateṅ jagat ta rāja* in the city of Śrī Mahendraparvata" (*man vraḥ pāda Parameśvara pratiṣṭhā kamrateṅ jagat ta rāja* [a]nau nagara Śrī Mahendraparvata, C, 56). See also G. Coedès/P. Dupont, 1945/46, "Les stèles de Phnoṃ Sandak et de Praḥ Vihar", in: *BEFEO*, XLIII, p. 103, note

rāja in accordance with the rules."[71] From this, to my understanding, it can only be concluded that a particular cult object, perhaps a sculpture, was consecrated *once*,[72] and that the further celebration of the ritual pertaining to this same cult object was observed by the successors of the foundation priest. This signification is confirmed in the inscription where it is said that the brahman Hiraṇyadāma, as a savant of occult magic, consecrated the *kamrateṅ jagat ta rāja* according to the Vināśikha ritual. Then he recited the four presumably tantric texts[73] from beginning to end, and wrote them down in order to instruct the court priest Śivakaivalya. "He taught Steṅ añ Śivakaivalya to celebrate the rite (*vidhi*) performed in the presence of the *kamrateṅ añ ta rāja*."[74] One of the consequences of this prominence accorded in the Sdok Kak Thoṃ inscription to the texts and to the rite (*vidhi*) based on them has been that Philippe Stern presumed the *devarāja* to be a rite ṛather than a particular cult object. Yet if we start from the premise that the *kamrateṅ jagat ta rāja* or the *devarāja* was a particular sculpture, then it is only to be expected that, once the cult object had been consecrated, the rite should occupy the foreground in the view of the successors of Śivakaivalya; for the celebration of it and, even more, the knowledge of the secret texts on which the whole cult rested, were the most important possession of this priestly family.

As we have already observed, there are pre-eminently two objections to the theory of the *devarāja* as an "idole unique". Coedès

---

71 *gi kule phoṅ siṅ nā kamrateṅ jagat ta rāja ru ta tāpra* [a]*nau* (D, 11-12). This explanation is repeated almost word for word, nine times altogether, for the reigns of all the Angkor kings up to Udayādityavarman II.

72 L.P. Briggs advanced most emphatically the opposite interpretation (1951 [see footnote 14], p. 233): "Hiraṇyadāma taught Sivakaivalya the magic ritual to enable the purohita or other members of the family to create a new devarāja on the accession of a new king."

73 As early as 1915, L. Finot supposed (1915 [see footnote 51], p. 57) that Tantric texts were involved here. See P.C. Bagchi, "On Some Tantrik Texts Studied in Ancient Kambuja", in: *Indian Historical Quarterly*, V (1929), pp. 754-69, and VI (1930), pp. 97-101. P. Dupont and G. Coedès (1943/46 [see footnote 23], p. 64), on the other hand, referred cautiously to "śāstra śivaites."

74 *gi ta thve vidhi nā kamrateṅ jagat ta rāja* (C, 75-76).

adduces against it, above everything else, the grandeur of the Tribhuvaneśvara *liṅga* of King Jayavarman IV, and Stern sees the *liṅga* of Yaśovarman on the Bakheṅ temple mountain as clear evidence that on occcasion the *devarāja* as *liṅga* was erected for a particular ruler on the temple mountain built by him.

Bearing in mind these objections, let us first examine the text of the inscription of Angkor.[75] Yaśovarman's procedure at the founding of Angkor is very clearly described in the Sdok Kak Thoṃ inscription. In the relevant passages of the text in the Khmer version, four successive transactions are protrayed: (1) Yaśovarman founded the city of Yaśodharapura (Angkor); (2) he transferred the *kamrateṅ jagat ta rāja* from Hariharālaya, his previous seat of government, to this city; (3) therupon Yaśovarman founded (*sthāpanā*) the "central mountain" of Angkor, the Bakheṅ temple mountain; and (4) the guru Vāmaśiva founded (*sthāpanā*) the sacred *liṅga* in the center - quite obviously referring to the *liṅga* on the central temple mountain, the Bakheṅ.[76]

The inscription makes it clear that first the *kamrateṅ jagat ta rāja* was brought to Yaśodharapura and only *later* was a *liṅga* consecrated on the central temple mountain built in the meantime. Even Coedès, who argues vehemently for the identity of the *kamrateṅ jagat ta rāja* / *devarāja* with the *liṅgas* on the Angkorian temple mountains,[77] comes, together with Dupont, to the same conclusion

---

[75] On the *tribhuvaneśvara liṅga* of Jayavarman see below.

[76] *man vraḥ pāda Paramśivaloka cat nagara Śrī-yaśodharapura nāṃ kamrateṅ jagat ta rāja aṃvi Hariharālaya yok duk ta nagara noḥ man vraḥ pāda Paramaśivaloka sthāpanā Vnāṃ Kantāl. kamrateṅ Śivāśrama sthāpanā vraḥ liṅga āy kantāl* (D, 12-13).

[77] In 1932 L. Finot (*BEFEO*, XXXII [1932], p. note 1) raised the question of why the Bakheṅ, which was consecrated in 889 A.D. [allegedly!] to the *devarāja*, should in a later inscription, in 968 A.D., be eulogized under the name of Yaśodhareśvara. G. Coedès answered (communication cited by L. Finot, *BEFEO*, XXXII [1932], p. 3, note 1) with the following suggested alternative explanation: (1) In the beginning, the Bakheṅ was possibly consecrated not to the *devarāja* but to the Yaśodhareśvara. This supposition is, however, certainly not confirmed by the Sdok Kak Thoṃ inscription (which is at least two hundred years later). (2) After his return from Koḥ Ker (944 A.D.) Rājendravarman did not reconsecrate the Bakheṅ, alienated as it had been from its original purpose by Jayavarman IV, to the *devarāja*, but instead he erected a new temple mountain to the *devarāja* and consecrated the Bakheṅ to the Yaśodhareśvara. In his article of 1970 about Jayavarman IV, G. Coedès raises the question whether the

in their translation of the inscription: "Le développement du récit montre clairement que le transfert du devarāja à Yaśodharapura constitue un épisode defini, tandis que la fondation du Mont Central, où un *liṅga* est placé, en constitue un autre. Chaque épisode est d'ailleurs introduit par *man*, 'alors', qui indique une reprise dans la narration."[78] So we can take it as certain that, in the Khmer version of the Sdok Kak Thoṃ inscription, for one thing, the transfer (*nāṃ*) of the *kamrateṅ jagat ta rāja* is recounted and, for another, it is reported that thereafter[79] (*man*) a *liṅga* was consecrated on the central temple mountain. It is not legitimate to infer the identity of both icons from the inscription, as Stern did.[80] So we may dispose of a major argument that has in the past been adduced for the identity of the *devarāja* with the *liṅgas* of the temple mountains of Angkor.

A further feature of the Sdok Kak Thoṃ inscription counts, to my understanding, just as unambiguously against the notion that from time to time the *devarāja* was consecrated afresh for a new

---

expression *devarāja* was known at all as early as the ninth century.

[78] G. Coedès and P. Dupont, 1943/46 (see footnote 23), p. 113, note 6.

[79] On *man* see Appendix.

[80] Ph. Stern (1934 [see footnote 40], p. 613), on the basis of the text, reasons from a presumed simultaneity of the above mentioned sequence of events to an identity of both icons: "la partie khmère du texte indique, avec précision, que le *Kamrateṅ jagat ta rāja, au moment de la fondation d'Angkor* (Yaśodharapura) fut érigé dans cette ville sur le mont central; or la partie correspondante sanskrite se borne à signaler (*BEFEO*, XV [1915], p. 80, verse 43) que, d'après les ordres du roi, *au moment de la fondation d'Angkor,* il (le Guru) érigea un *liṅga* sur le mont Śrī Yaśodharagiri, égal en beauté au roi des Monts" (emphasis added). ["The Khmer section of the text indicates precisely that the *kamrateṅ jagat ta rāja, at the moment when Angkor (Yaśodharapura) was founded,* was erected in this town upon the central mountain; but the corresponding Sanskrit passage confines itself to the information that, following the orders of the king, *at the moment when Angkor was founded,* he (the guru) erected a *liṅga* on mount Śrī Yaśodharagiri, equal in beauty to the king of the Mountains."] This synchronism of the erection of a *liṅga* and the shift of the *kamrateṅ jagat ta rāja* must, however, rest on an error: the expression "at the moment of the foundation of Angkor" does not occur either in the text or the translation of L. Finot cited: "D'après les ordres du roi, il érigea un *liṅga* sur le mont Śrī Yaśodharagiri, égal en beauté au Roi des monts (l'Himālaya)." [Following the king's orders, he erected a *liṅga* on Mount Śrī Yaśodharagiri, equal in beauty to the King of the Mountains (the Himalaya)."] L. Finot, *BEFEO*, XV (1915), p. 80, at verse XLIII.

ruler in the *liṅga* of a new temple. In the Sdok Kak Thoṃ inscription it is certainly explained what "personal *liṅgas*" the various successors of Śivakaivalya caused to be consecrated in their respective villages. In the same way we are told, in chronological sequence, under which family chiefs of this priestly dynasty the "whole family officiated in accordance with the prescriptions in the presence of the *kamrateṅ jagat ta rāja*". On the other hand, we hear nothing about the *devarājas* alleged to be rededicated constantly. If the *devarājas* always had to be consecrated afresh in the royal *liṅgas* of the reigning kings, then it becomes a problem for us to see why these *liṅgas* and their consecration are not named in the inscription in association with their constantly repeated references to the *kamrateṅ jagat ta rāja*, especially since we know that the names of the *liṅgas* of these temples were in no way forgotten or altered with the death of their founders. As a particularly good example in this connection, the Indreśvara on the Bakoṅ in Hariharālaya (Roluos) may be noticed. If this *liṅga*, which was still known by its founder's name generations after its founder Indravarman,[81] and famed for the magnificence of its temple, had been consecrated as the *devarāja* by a member of the family of Śivakaivalya, then it would be incomprehensible why this consecration is not mentioned in the inscription.[82] The only answer to this question that can properly be given is that the Indreśvara was *not* the *devarāja* during the reign of Indravarman.[83]

A number of further controversial problems which have arisen in the course of debate about the *devarāja* cult can be largely resolved by reference to the Sdok Kak Thoṃ inscription. Thus, the

---

[81] In an inscription of 960 A.D. it is named *vraḥ kamrateṅ añ Śrī Indreśvara* (*IC*, IV, p. 103 [K. 265] A, 14-15).

[82] Instead, however, we find only the laconic statement that "under the reign of His Royal Highness Īśvaraloka (Indravarman I) the *kamrateṅ jagat ta rāja* was in Hariharālaya, (and) the whole family officiated according to the rules in the presence of the *kamrateṅ jagat ta rāja*" (D, 4-5). As further examples, the *liṅgas* of Rājendravarman in the Eastern Mebon and Pre̥ Rup may be cited. Moreover, there is the *liṅga* of Śiva erected around 1000 A.D. by Śivācārya on the Hemaśṛṅga (Ta Keo); cp. the Stele of Tūol Ta Pec, śloka XCI (*IC*, V, p. 256).

[83] In the foundation inscription of the Bakoṅ is clearly written: *Śrī-Indreśvara iti liṅga* (*IC*, I, p. 32, śloka XXIII). See also Baksei Chamkroṅ, śloka XXVI (*IC*, IV, pp. 88 ff.).

Khmer rendering of it leaves no doubt that a cult image and not an abstract rite occupies the central position in the *devarāja* cult. For it is said constantly, as had already been mentioned more than once, that the members of the Śivakaivalya family officiated *in the presence of*[84] the *kamrateṅ jagat ta rāja*. This "in the presence of" is invariably represented in Khmer by *nā*, which has an unambiguously locative significance, and here it can only be said that a rite was performed in front of a *cult image*.[85] The word *nāṃ*,[86] which is always used when the *devarāja* follows the king on a change of capital, points in the same direction. *Nāṃ*, which is equivalent in meaning to the expression "to escort a person", is applicable rather to a cult image than to an abstract rite. So also with *arcā* or *arcana* in the Sanskrit version of the inscription, which is the equivalent of "veneration, worship". In a context such as "they offered worship to the *devarāja* (*devarāja cakrur arccāṃ*, B, 34), *devarāja* can only represent a cult object, but not its ritual.[87]

A further question, critical for the problem of the divinization of rulers in Cambodia, is likewise clearly answered in the Sdok Kak Thoṃ inscription. That is, in complete accordance with Filliozat's interpretation, we find absolutely no indication in the Sdok Kak Thoṃ inscription that the kings of Angkor were worshipped as *devarāja* or *kamrateṅ jagat ta rāja*. On the contrary, it is stated unambiguously that the rite on Mahendraparvata was performed by Hiraṇyadāma at the request of Jayavarman II so that there should be "only one king who was *cakravartin*" (C, 73).[88] A

---

[84] Or "in connection with." See Appendix under *nā*.

[85] I.W. Mabbett, 1969 (see footnote 17), p. 206.

[86] See Appendix under *naṃ*.

[87] S. Sahai, 1970 (see footnote 38), p. 41: "Notre texte indique clairement que le devarāja n'était pas un simple rituel, mais une divinité adorée avec des rites précis." ["Our text shows clearly that the devarāja was not a mere ritual but a divinity worshipped with specific rites."]

[88] It is not in the least disputed here that the idea of a "universal ruler" (*cakravartin*) contained in itself a species of divinization of the ruler. The concern here is merely to establish whether the conception of the *devarāja* assumed proportions exceeding those of its Indian models - perhaps in the sense of an outright identification: the king is God.

further indication of the "earthly" character of the rule wielded by the kings of Angkor may be seen in the expression *kamrateṅ phdai karoṃ* which is used many times in the inscription for "king". *Phdai karoṃ* means "lower plane, the earth", so *kamrateṅ phdai karoṃ* is equivalent to "lord of the lower plane, lord of the earth".[89] While the conceptions *kamrateṅ jagat ta rāja* ("lord of the world, who is king") and *kamrateṅ phdai karoṃ* ("the lord of the lower plane/-earth") seem indeed to be parallel ideas, in the Sdok Kak Thoṃ inscription they in fact designate two poles of lordship. The god Śiva is the "lord of the world, who is king" (one might say: the highest king), while here below the king rules as "lord of the earth."[90] This antithesis becomes even clearer when we read that the "lord of the world, who is king" protects (*cāṃ*) the "lord of the earth" (C, 81-82). One must therefore ask how the king of Angkor can be the *kamrateṅ jagat ta rāja* himself when he is actually protected by the latter. We may take it as established, then, that the Sdok Kak Thoṃ inscription offers no warrant at all for the theory that the kings of Angkor were "god-kings" (*devarāja*): on the contrary, it is stated unambiguously that the "lord of the earth" is protected by the "lord of the world."

IV. Devarāja - a "*Calantī Pratimā*" of the God Śiva?

In the foregoing discussion we were able to establish that an analysis of the Sdok Kak Thoṃ inscription shows the *devarāja* to have been of necessity a cult object and that this cult object was not identical with the *liṅgas* which the kings of Angkor had erected on the monumental temple mountains of their capitals. But the Sdok Kak Thoṃ inscription does not help us any further with

---

[89] S. Lewitz, 1971, "L'inscription de Phimeanakas (K. 484) (Etude linguistique)", in: *BEFEO*, LVIII, p. 98: *"Kamrateṅ phdai karoṃ*, Lit. 'seigneur de la surface inférieure', c'est-à-dire 'le roi' régnant sur 'la terre', laquelle s'oppose au ciel qui est 'la surface supérieure' (*phdai le*)." [*"Kamrateṅ phdai karoṃ*, lit. 'lord of the lower surface', that is, 'the king' reigning over 'the earth', as opposed to the sky which is 'the upper surface' (*phdai le*)."]

[90] A verse of the Praḥ Bat inscription cited by J. Filliozat (1954 [see footnote 69], p. 550) seems to point in a similar direction. Here it is said that the two worlds have two protectors: "this world" has the king (Yaśovarman) and the heavens have the Great Indra.

the question what sculpture or what cult object was worshipped as *devarāja*, as it contains no relevant data. In any event, the inscription allows the legitimate supposition that, in the domain of royal Śaivism, a Śiva *liṅga* could have been involved.[91] It is likewise unclear in which temple the conjectural *devarāja* sculpture was worshipped. Indeed the fact that to date it has not been possible to assign this function to an Angkorian temple induced Coedès to reject Finot's theory of the "idole unique".[92] Since neither epigraphic nor archaeological sources seem to afford us any information showing in which sculpture and in which temple the *devarāja* was worshipped, and since we have now had to dispense with the theory of identity between *devarāja* and the temple pyramid *liṅgas*, only the avenue of hypothesis remains open to us at present if we are to approach the solution to this problem.

It appears that in the past, whenever discussion has turned on the *devarāja* as "idole unique", it is only the central god statue or the *liṅga* in the central sanctuary of the relevant state temple that has been considered. But there is a further form of the *mūrti* of a god that still plays an extremely important role today in the Hindu temples of India. This further form, found in many of the larger

---

[91] G. Coedès, 1968 (see footnote 6), p. 23: "Most of the kingdoms founded in Farther India soon adopted the Śaivite conception of royalty, based on the Brahman-Kshatriya pairing and expressed in the cult of the royal *liṅga*."

[92] G. Coedès, 1952 (see footnote 2), p. 13: "L'hypothèse d'un *devarāja* unique à travers les siècles soulève de grandes difficultés, car on a vainement cherché son sanctuaire parmi les grands monuments de la capitale." ["The hypothesis of a single *devarāja* enduring through centuries raises great difficulties, because its sanctuary has been sought in vain among the great monuments of the capital."] See further G. Coedès, 1952 (see footnote 2), p. 52. Possibly it is P. Dupont who is responsible for the suggestions in the Preface to G. Coedès' and P. Dupont's edition of the Sdok Kak Thoṃ inscription where it is said, characteristically, that "L'object, un *liṅga* sans doute, auquel s'adressait le culte, était *unique* et pouvait être déplacé. L'inscription de Sdok Kak Thoṃ mentionne à plusieurs reprises que le *kamrateṅ jagat ta rāja* a été transporté à la suite de tel roi, installé dans telle capitale. Il avait donc une personnalité physique et n'était vraisemblablement pas remplaçable" (1943/46a [see footnote 23], p. 64). ["The object to which the cult was directed, doubtless a *liṅga*, was *unique* and could be moved. The Sdok Kak Thoṃ inscription mentions repeatedly that the *kamrateṅ jagat ta rāja* was transported in the retinue of this or that king, installed in this or that capital. Thus it had a physical personality and probably was not replaceable." (Emphasis added.)] This explanation of the *devarāja* cult comes closest to the one offered here, but clearly contradicts earlier and later statements by G. Coedès.

temples of India, is the *calantī pratimā*, which takes the form of a (usually) bronze "mobile image" of the chief divinity. These movable god-images are an important constituent of the cult, especially during the major temple festivals, when they are taken through the streets of the temple city. At that time, they are carried on temple carts or litters as *utsava mūrti* ("festival image") of the god - whose primary image remains standing in the temple. A *calantī pratimā* was and is especially important in Śaivite temples, in which a *liṅga* is worshipped. As indeed Finot has remarked, this *liṅga* that stands fast in the temple naturally cannot be carried out on the occasion of festivals, and certainly it cannot be taken to the new capitals.[93]

One of the most famous Śiva temples of India is the Liṅgarāja temple in Bhubaneswar, Orissa (in eastern India).[94] This temple provides us with a good example. At the center point of the Liṅgarāja cult stands a *svayambhū-liṅga*, a "self-existent" manifestation of the god Śiva, in massive stone. It goes without saying that this "self-generated" image of Śiva cannot be removed from the spot where Śiva originally manifested himself. So, during the numerous Liṅgarāja festivals, the function of "deputy" for Śiva outside the temple is discharged by a four-armed bronze sculpture, about 45 cm. in height, which represents Śiva as Candraśekhara.[95] During the festivals, this sculpture is the focus of all those rituals

---

[93] Thus, it is stated unabiguously: "A *Śivaliṅga* may not be moved" (*śivaliṅgaṃ na cālayet*).

[94] This, one of the largest Śiva temples in eastern India, is evidently a "contemporary" of the largest Śaivite temple mountain of Angkor, the Baphuon, which was built at the beginning of the second half of the eleventh century. K.C. Panigrahi, *Archaeological Remains at Bhubaneswar* (Calcutta, 1961), p. 166.

[95] Rajendralala Mitra, *The Antiquities of Orissa* (Calcutta, 1875, new impression Calcutta, 1963), II, pp. 133 ff. On Śiva's Candraśekharamūrti, see J.N. Banerjea, *The Development of Hindu Iconography*, 2nd ed. (Calcutta, 1956), p. 463.

that are directed to the Liṅgarāja as "(Śiva-)Liṅga which is the king."[96]

In Orissa, just as in other parts of India, *calantī pratimā* sculptures played an important role which could be of very considerable significance for the meaning of the *devarāja*. There are numerous examples of the elevation of powerful regional deities to the status of imperial divinities (*rāṣṭradevatā*) of the ruling dynasties. Especially on occasions when the holy places of these divinities were remote from capitals established by new dynasties, it seems to have been only a matter of time before bronze sculptures were made of the original god-images (*mūla bera*) and worshipped in the imperial capitals, usually in the immediate vicinity of the palace. Aniconic effigies of *ṭhākurāṇīs* or *svayaṃbhū-liṅgas* especially are thus embodied as Hindu divinities with particular regularity. A familiar example from Orissa would be perhaps the Ṭhākurānī Bhaṭṭārikā. While she is worshipped in her original site on the River Mahānadī in an uncarved stone, she is at the same time in the palace of Barāmbā as Durgā-Mahiṣāsuramardinī, the imperial divinity (*rāṣṭradevatā*) of the former princely state of Barāmbā.[97] The rite of this "deputy" sculpture was performed in the palace of the king's court chaplain "with the exclusion of other people" - just as the Sdok Kak Thoṃ inscription says with regard to the *devarāja*. Just as the *devarāja* as "source of the treasure of power" seems to have been held most precious in the sight of the king, so in Orissa it was permitted only to the king and his court priest to set foot in the sanctuary of the *rāṣṭradevatā* in the palace precincts. Naturally

---

[96] The name Liṅgarāja is not without interest for our discussion of the *devarāja*. The two names are constructed in parallel ways. If we relate *liṅga* to Śiva = Deva, then the name *liṅgarāja* comes very close to the name *devarāja* in meaning as well. In the case of *liṅgarāja*, indeed, we have to reckon with a double meaning: "the king of the *liṅgas*" (in regard to the rest of the *liṅgas* in India) and "the king who is a *liṅga*". In ritual, *liṅgarāja* receives royal honors and attributes, possibly in emulation of the state cult of the Vaiṣṇavite Jagannātha in Orissa and in competition with it.

[97] For an aetiological explanation of this "metamorphosis" see *Pilāṅka Baḍāmbā Itihāsa*, 1940, p. 26. The example best known throughout Orissa of the promotion of an originally tribal, regional divinity to the rank of a "Hinduized" state divinity is the Viṣṇu-Jagannātha in Puri (see H. Kulke, 1974, "Some Remarks about the Jagannātha Trinity", in: *Indologen-Tagung 1971*, pp. 129 f. Edited by Herbert Härtel and Volker Moeller. Berlin). On the "promotion" of Durgā see H. Goetz, 1974, *Studies in History, Religion and Art of Classic Medieval India*, pp. 70 ff, Wiesbaden.

enough, the observance of this cult, just like that of the *devarāja*, was made hereditary in the family of the court priest (*rājaguru*). Like the *devarāja* of Angkor, the sculpture as *rāṣṭradevatā* was always transferred on a change of capital, while the primal divinity remained as ever in its original abode. It seems that sometimes these bronze *rāṣṭradevatās* were even taken into battle to protect "their" kings. It is not difficult to surmise the reason why a *calantī pratimā* was brought into the vicinity of the palace. It was held to make the power of the state divinity effective for the legitimation of rulership. In the later middle ages, the kings of the central Orissan dynasty were reigning as *rāuta*, regents of their imperial tutelary divinity.[98] Almost simultaneously in tenth and eleventh century Angkor, the notion prevailed that the king was a "part" (*aṃśa*) of the state god Śiva (see below).

When we examine the evidence in the Angkorian inscriptions where references to the *devarāja* cult are made, we find one inscription which could perhaps offer confirmation of the hypothesis that the *devarāja* was also worshipped in the form of a *calantī pratimā*. An inscription of Kok Rosei enumerates the endowments made by the priest Sivācārya, who was presumably the famous *purohita* of the *devarāja* under kings Jayavarman V and Sūryavarman I at the end of the tenth and the beginning of the eleventh centuries. In this inscription it is reported that he had made three presentations to Bhadreśvara (the state divinity of the pre-Angkorian Chenla state), "my divine lord, who is lordship" (*vraḥ kamrateṅ an ta rājya*), and to the "Lord of the world" in Liṅgapura (Koḥ Ker). Now, the immediate context in which "the divine lord who is lordship" is named should strike us: *ta vraḥ kamrateṅ aṅ ta rājya sru vra(ḥ) vleṅ pratidina liḥ mvāy* - for the divine lord who is

[98] H. Kulke, 1974 (see footnote 97). See also G. Sontheimer, "Religious Endowments in India: The Juristic Personality of Hindu Deities", in: *Zeitschrift für vergleichende Rechtswissenschaft*, LXVII (1964), p. 76: "The king's being an agent of the god proved to be a very effective assurance of the loyalty of the subjects and prevented any further disturbances from the side of the people, which shows that the deity can be a very potent force."

lordship, daily one liḥ of rice for the holy fire."[99] The holy fire (*vraḥ vleṅ*) of Angkor here stands in a close relationship with the *kamrateṅ añ ta rājya*, or rather the two together seem actually to compose a unity. The holy fire must have played a prominent role in the state cult of Angkor. Thus in 1001 A.D. the dignitaries of the Cambodian empire swore their famous oath of allegiance to Sūryavarman I in front of the holy fire,[100] and in the magnificent "historial gallery" of Angkor Wat, in the scene showing Sūryavarman II's military parade, the holy fire is clearly visible on a litter carried before the *rājapurohita* and the brahmans.[101] Significant for our hypothesis is the fact that the holy fire here appears in the form of a *calantī pratimā*. Its outward, cylindrical form, from whose upper curve fanshaped flames seem to spring forth, was explained by Groslier as a miniature *stūpa* and by Bosch as a *liṅga*.[102] Bosch bases his explanation chiefly on the mythologically derived and epigraphically attested relationship between the *liṅga* and fire.

None of this should give the impression that the *devarāja* is identical with the holy fire of Angkor. The intention here is merely to point to the possible *functional* contiguity of both cult objects. If, as has commonly been assumed in the past,[103] the "lord

---

[99] *IC*, VI, pp. 173-80 (K. 175). Stele of Kôk Rosei, A, 16-17: "au Dieu royal (*V.K.A. ta rājya*) quotidiennement: 1 *liḥ* de paddy pour le Feu sacré." ["Daily, to the royal God (*vraḥ kamrateṅ añ ta rājya*) one liḥ of paddy for the Sacred Fire."] The damaged west side of the stele mentions the family (of Śivācārya?) in connection with the *vraḥ kamrateṅ añ ta rājya* (*IC*, VI, p. 176, lines 5-6).

[100] G. Coedès, 1913: "Etudes cambodgiennes.IX. Le serment des fonctionnaires de Sūryavarman I", in: *BEFEO*, XIII, 6, pp. 12 ff. Likewise the author of the Sdok Kak Thoṃ inscription, Sadāśiva, was married to the sister-in-law of Sūryavarman I before the Sacred Fire.

[101] G. Coedès, 1932, *Le temple d'Angkor Vat.* Avec une introduction de G. Coedès, 3 vols. La galerie de bas-reliefs, troisième partie. Mémoires archéologiques, publiés par l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient, vol. II. Paris, pl. 549.

[102] F.D.K. Bosch, 1932, "Notes archéologiques VI. Le temple d'Angkor Vat. a) La procession du Feu Sacré", in: *BEFEO*, XXXII, p. 11: "l'objet porté en procession solonnelle est, soit un *liṅga* vénéré comme le feu sacré, soit un réceptacle du feu sacré en forme de *liṅga*." ["The object carried in solemn procession is either a *liṅga* venerated as the Sacred Fire or a receptable of the Sacred Fire in the form of a *liṅga*."]

[103] *IC*, VI, pp. 173-80; S. Sahai, 1970, p. 43; G. Coedès, 1970, p. 59.

who is lordship" endowed by Śivācārya should be identical with the *devarāja*, then this "functional" contiguity emerges from Śivācārya's inscription. *Vraḥ kamrateṅ añ ta rājya* and *vraḥ vleṅ* obviously belong closely together in the cult realm, in that the holy fire seems to have been almost a constituent of the *devarāja* cult. In this connection, a conclusion established by Bhattacharya has definite significance for our discussion: "Certains textes permettent même le conclure que le Feu était gardé en permanence *dans le palais royal.* Les inscriptions de Phimānakas et de Prasat Tor (règne de Jayavarman VII) parlent de la 'salle du Feu' (*agnigṛha, vahnyāgarā*)."[104]

With the help of parallels from eastern India (where *calantī pratimās* of imperial divinities were kept in palaces or their precincts) and information gained from analysis of both the Sdok Kak Thoṃ inscription and that of Śivācārya, the following hypothetical explanation may be advanced: the *devarāja* was a *calantī pratima* in the form of a bronze sculpture representing Śiva in one of his divine embodiments. This sculpture was worshipped in successive capitals, either in the palace or within the palace grounds in a special building, which, in the style of the royal palaces of Angkor, was built for the "god who is the king" of perishable but valuable material. When kings moved to other palaces or new capitals, this *calantī pratimā* of the *devarāja* was escorted there (*nāṃ*) as palladium of the empire. It had to remain close to the king in order to watch over (*cāṃ*) the "lord of the earth" as "the lord of the world".[105]

V. Were the Kings of Angkor "Participants" in Divine Rule?

With these hypotheses envisaging the *devarāja* as a *calantī pratimā* of an original *liṅga* on Mahendraparvata, this discussion's immediate task, in the strict sense, is now concluded. But the *devarāja* cult

---

[104] K. Bhattacharya, 1961 (see footnote 8), p. 148 (emphasis added). ["Certain texts even allow the conclusion that the Fire was kept permanently *in the royal palace*. The inscriptions of the Phimānakas and at Prasat Tor (reign of Jayavarman VII) mention the 'chamber of the Fire' (*agnigṛha, vahnyagāra*)".]

[105] R.C. Majumdar (1963 [see footnote 4], p. 210) may be right when he designates the *devarāja* as the "tutelary deity of the kingdom".

belongs also to a broader context - the glorification and divinization that characterize the proceedings of kingship (*rājya*) and kings (*rāja*) as bearers of dominion in India and the regions influenced by India. Though we cannot attend here in any greater detail to the various forms the Cambodian rulers' apotheoses have taken, still there is one reason that requires us to establish more specifically how we should regard some aspects of the Angkorian kings' divinization. The inscriptions of Angkor contain allusions to the divine essence of the kings as a "portion" (*aṃśa*) of Śiva that is located, as the king's "subtle inner self" (*sūkṣmāntarātman*), in a Śiva *liṅga*, and these allusions regularly refer to the *liṅgas* which the kings caused to be consecrated on the temple mountains built by them. Since these *liṅgas* have previously been seen as the *devarāja* of successive kings, the inscriptional references concerning these *liṅgas* have commonly been applied directly to the interpretation of the *devarāja* cult as a whole. This is true in large measure for the central *liṅgas* of the Bakheṅ, the Prasat Thoṃ in Koḥ Ker, and the Baphuon, which have previously been seen as the *devarājas* of their founders, kings Yaśovarman I, Jayavarman IV, and Udayādityavarman II, and which therefore played a crucial role in the discussion of the *devarāja* cult. However, as the opposite theory is advanced here, it is therefore necessary to make clear at the outset that these *liṅgas* are not identical with the *devarāja*. After clarifying this matter, we may briefly notice the significance of these royal *liṅgas* on the temple mountains for the royal cult in Angkor. These observations are so to speak extraneous to our discussion of the *devarāja* cult as such.

Having cited the above evidence refuting the identification of the Bakheṅ *liṅga* with the *devarāja*, we may now turn to the Tribhuvaneśvara *liṅga* of the usurper Jayavarman IV. At the very outset of his reign in his new capital of Chok Gargyar (Koḥ Ker) to the northeast of Angkor, Jayavarman appears to have begun with the construction of what was then the largest temple mountain of Cambodia, the Prasat Thoṃ. On it he consecrated the Tribhuvaneśvara *liṅga*, which was to play a prominent role in the legitimation of his rule. In the inscriptions of Koḥ Ker this *liṅga* is called *kamrateṅ jagat ta rājya* as well as *tribhuvaneśvara* ("lord of the three worlds"). Now as Coedès sees both the *kamrateṅ jagat ta rājya* in the Koḥ Ker inscriptions and the *kamrateṅ jagat ta rāja* familiar

to us from the Sdok Kak Thoṃ inscription, similarly as names of the *devarāja*, it follows that the Tribhuvaneśvara *liṅga* represents for him the demonstration par excellence that the *devarāja* was erected and consecrated afresh by successive reigning monarchs on their new temple mountains.[106]

To the arguments previously adduced against this theory, touching on the *devarāja* cult as a whole, may be added two more important ones which in connection with Koḥ Ker militate against Coedès' theory. Through them it is possible to establish that, on the one hand, the Tribhuvaneśvara *liṅga* cannot have been the *devarāja* of Jayavarman and that, on the other, in the first years of his reign Jayavarman ruled in Koḥ Ker without the legitimation of the *devarāja* cult. In an inscription of Koḥ Ker dated 923 Śaka (1001 A.D.) it is reported that high officials in the service of King Udayādityavarman I (ca. 1001-1002 A.D.) bestowed endowments upon the *kamrateṅ añ jagat ta rāja* in Chok Garyar (Koḥ Ker).[107] So there can be no doubt that in 1001 A.D. the *kamrateṅ añ jagat ta rāja* = *tribhuvaneśvara* was still in Koḥ Ker. At this time the original *kamrateṅ jagat ta rāja* = *devarāja* had already been back in Angkor for about half a century, since Rājendravarman II (94-68 A.D.) had shifted the capital back to Angkor and "taken back the *kamrateṅ jagat ta rāja* at the same time".[108] It should therefore be apparent that the name *kamrateṅ jagat ta rājya* was applied to the *tribhuvaneśvara* and not to the *devarāja*.

In another inscription of Koḥ Ker it is mentioned that as early as 921 A.D. Jayavarman IV had the Tribhuvaneśvara *liṅga* consecrated in Koḥ Ker.[109] Elsewhere, however, in the Sdok Kak

---

[106] G. Coedès, 1970 (see footnote 7), pp. 58 f., and 1968 (see footnote 6), p. 314, note 86. See also S. Sahai, 1970 (see footnote 38), p. 42.

[107] Koḥ Ker, Prasat Thoṃ (K. 682), lines 3-6 (*IC*, I, p. 50).

[108] Sdok Kak Thoṃ inscription, D. 36-37.

[109] The *vraḥ kamrateṅ añ jagat ta rājya* is named in other inscriptions of Koḥ Ker as early as 9early as 921 A.D. (G. Coedès, 1931 [see footnote 31], p. 15). On the chronology of Jayavarman IV seeC. Jacques, 1971, "Etudes d'épigraphie cambodgienne. VI. Sur les données chronologiques de la stèle de Tūol Ta Pec (K. 834)", in: *BEFEO*, LVIII, pp. 168 ff. He contradicts G. Coedès' contention that by 921 A.D. Jayavarman had already assumed power as usurper. C. Jacques bases himself on two inscriptions

Thoṃ inscription, we learn that the priest Kumārsvāmin and his whole family "officiated before the *kamrateṅ jagat ta rāja*" under kings Harṣavarman I and Īśānavarman II (D, 29). Yet until about 922 A.D. or 925/928 A.D. these kings were ruling in Angkor.[110] From this, to my understanding, it can only be concluded that in the first years of his reign as opposition king in Koḥ Ker Jayavarman IV was not in possession of the *devarāja*.[111] In the Sdok Kak Thoṃ inscription it is said that Jayavarman IV "went forth from the city of Śrī Yaśodharapura to be ruler in Chok Gargyar, (and) took with him the *kamrateṅ jagat ta rāja*" (D, 31-32). Accordingly the second part of this statement, concerning the *devarāja*, can only apply to the period after the end of the rule of Īśānavarman, when Jayavarman IV was sole ruler of Cambodia, and when he had already consecrated the Tribhuvaneśvara *liṅga* in Koḥ Ker and installed it at the center of his religious legitimating system..

The history of political ideas as a whole in Cambodia and, in a measure, in Southeast Asia, has been strongly influenced by the fact that Jayavarman IV must have reigned as a usurper without the sanction of legal succcession and, for several years, without legitimation by the *devarāja* cult. To use Max Weber's terms,[112]

(Prasat Nāṅ Khmau, *IC*, II, p. 32, verse III, and Tūol Tạ Pec, *IC*, V, p. 256, verse LXXXVI), which both date Jayavarman's accession to Śaka 850 = 928 A.D. For Jacques, the royal titles of Jayavarman and the mention of *rājya* in his early inscriptions of 921 and 922 A.D. apply to Jayavarman as "roi de Koḥ Ker, et non pas roi das Khmèr" (p. 169) ["king of Koḥ Ker, and not king of the Khmers"]. But it still remains unclear how, in C. Jacques's view, it can have been possible for the ruler of Angkor to grant Jayavarman "voluntarily" the liberty to build himself such a "bastion" in Koḥ Ker, north of Angkor, equipped with all the insignia of royal dominion, including the tallist temple mountain in Cambodia - while at the same time the construction of the Bakṣei Chamkron temple was manifestly a far less pretentious undertaking.

[110] G. Coedès, 1968 (see footnote 6), p. 114; C. Jacques, 1971 (see footnote 109), pp. 168 ff.

[111] L.P. Briggs (1951 [see footnote 6], p. 116) attempts to resolve the difficulties with the idea of a schism in the *devarāja* cult: "The existence of two God-Kings would not seem so strange if, as Stern thinks, the *kamrateṅ jagat ta rāja* was a ritual, which could transform any *liṅga* into a God-King." It is remarkable that, as far as I know, G. Coedès did not explore this obvious contradiction to his theory in the epigraphic evidence.

[112] Max Weber, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft. Studienausgabe*, ed. J. Winkelman (Köln/Berlin, 1964), pp. 184 ff., 865.

Jayavarman must have striven to establish a new legitimacy of his own stemming from the "charisma of office"[113] in opposition to the legitimacy stemming from the "charisma of succession" possessed by the kings rightfully enthroned in Angkor. This occurred when Jayavarman caused the then-biggest temple mountain erected in Cambodia to be built, the architectural austerity of which generated a stark monumentality that was not exceeded even by later buildings. However, instead of combining the name of the *liṅga* of this temple with his own name ("Jayeśvara"), he dedicated it to Śiva Tribhuvaneśvara, the "Lord of the three worlds".[114] To this divinity, the lord of his "own" state temple, Jayavarman gave veneration as the supreme lord of the world, and thereby attributed sovereignty to it so that in future he would rule as "part" of (*aṃśa*) or participant in Śiva. So, as "deputy" for Śiva, he was accountable only to the god. Thus Jayavarman derived the legitimacy of his rule directly from Śiva. An attack on the king would be tantamount to an attack on the rule of Śiva.[115] Hence Jayavarman IV,

---

[113] Another alternative to legitimacy based on the "charisma of succession", less familiar in Angkor, was constituted by charismatic rule on the strength of divine election. This method of legitimizing a *coup d'état* retrospectively, which was common especially in India and Indonesia, was usually mediated by the "court mythographers" who concocted legends recounting how the usurper became the elect of the national divinity. On this, see for example C.C. Berg, "Javanische Geschichtsschreibung", in: *Saeculum*, VII (1956), pp. 168-181; VIII (1957), pp. 249-66; see above chapter 11.

[114] What J. Filliozat says of the *devarāja* in general is especially true of the Tribhuvaneśvara *liṅga* - it is not the kings of Angkor that are worshipped in it but the god Śiva (as king). Thus the name of the *liṅga* in Koḥ Ker is not that of the king who endowed it, but that of the same Śiva Tribhuvaneśvara, and its designation as the *liṅga* of Śiva is made explicit in many ways - for example *ugrasya liṅgam, liṅgaṃ idam śivasya* (Koḥ Ker, Prasat Damrei, K. 677, verses XV, XIX, *IC*, I, pp. 58 f.), *Śambhor liṅgam* (Koḥ Ker, Prasat Andet, K. 675, verse XXVIII, *IC*, I. p. 64). The name Tribhuvaneśvara, for G. Coedès an index of Jayavarman's claim to "cosmic dominion", is also another name of Śiva current in Cambodia. Thus the inscription of Palhal from the year 1069 A.D. records the consecration of a Tribhuvaneśvaradeva (G. Coedès, 1913, "Etudes cambodgiennes. XI. La stèle de Palhal", in: *BEFEO*, XIII, 6, p. 28). C. Jacques (1971 [see footnote 109], p. 169) follows the views of Filliozat concerning the Tribhuvaneśvara.

[115] From Orissa in India we have a convincing parallel to this. King Kapilendra, who usurped the throne in 1435 A.D. and founded the Sūryavaṃśa dynasty, had himself extolled as the elect of the Orissa state divinity Jagannātha, transferred sovereignty (*sāṃrājya*) to this divinity, and reigned as its servant (*sevaka*). As such he threatened in several inscriptions that opposition to his own orders would be treason (*droha*)

the usurper, possessed a higher legitimation for his rule than the kings of Angkor whose legitimacy was derived from the "charisma of succession".[116]

This development can easily be discerned in the inscriptions of Jayavarman. As early as 921 B.C., we read: "In his humility, this victorious Śrī Jayavarman caused to be remitted to Tribhuvaneśvara the entire glory and the power of sovereignty."[117] In the same year, we find the Tribhuvaneśvara *liṅga* eulogized as *vraḥ kamrateṅ añ jagat ta rāyja* - "My Divine Lord of the World Who is Lordhsip."[118] In the undated inscription of Jayavarman from Prasat Daṃrei in Koḥ Ker, it is further announced that Śiva came down to earth in order to protect the steadfast [King Indravarman] who was part (*aṃśa*) of his own self.[119]

In the inscriptions of the two most powerful rulers of Angkor in the eleventh century, we came across the influence of this idea that the king is a part of the god who wields supreme sovereignty as tutelary state divinity - the idea which began to produce marked

---

towards the state divinity Jagannātha. On Kapilendra's inscriptions see K.B. Tripathi, *The Evolution of Oriyā Language and Script* (Cuttack, 1962, pp. 251-73.

116 "If the legitimacy of the ruler is itself not secured by the charisma of succession in accordance with unambiguous rules, he then requires legitimation by another form of charismatic power, and in the normal way this can only be the hierocratic form. This is also, and especially, true for the ruler who embodies a divine incarnation and thus possesses the highest 'personal charisma'." Max Weber, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*, p. 865.

117 "[*te*] *na* [*Śrījaya*] *varmaṇā vijayinā rājyasya sārādbhutaṃ bhaktyā sarvam adīyata tri. . . .*" (Prasat Thoṃ inscription, in A. Barth and A. Bergaigne, *Inscriptions Sanskrites du Champa et du Cambodge*, LXIV, verse III), following the citation of G. Coedès, 1931 (see footnote 31), pp. 13 f. He relates sarvam to the endowment recorded by the inscription: "ce [Śrī Jaya] varman victorieux a donné avec dévotion tout ceci, merveille et essence de la royauté." ["This victorious Jayavarman has in devotion granted all this, the wonder and the essence of royalty."]

118 G. Coedès, 1931 (see footnote 31), p. 15. Inscription of Prasat Thoṃ, eastern gopura, second prakāra-wall.

119 (K. 677) Koḥ Ker, Prasat Daṃrei, śloka XVII (*IC*, I, p. 58). This very likely represents the influence of the Vaiṣṇavite *avatāra* doctrine. The *aṃśa* idea points in the same direction, for this too seems to belong in the realm of Vaiṣṇavism rather than Śaivism. Thus, in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, the Ur-king Pṛthu is praised as *aṃśa* of Viṣṇu (*Harer aṃśaḥ*, XV, 6, or again *Viṣṇoḥ kalā*, XV, 3).

effects on the legitimation ideology of Cambodia only under Jayavarman IV.[120] Sūryavarman I (1002-1052 A.D.) who is generally considered to have been a Buddhist, endowed "his" temple mountain in Angkor, Śrī Sūryaparvata, with a Śiva-*liṅga* under the name of Śaṃbhu.[121] In doing so he was following the example of Jayavarman IV in bestowing one of the names of Śiva, and not his own name, upon the *liṅga* endowed by him on the royal temple mountain. Just as Jayavarman, in his inscription, is lauded as "fixed portion" of Śiva, for whose protection Śiva descended to earth, so a hundred years later we find King Sūryavarman I eulogized as an "enduring image of Śiva upon earth."[122] There is another relevant inscription which is essentially concerned with the accession of Sūryavarman even though it dates from the period of Udayādityavarman's reign (1050-1068 A.D.): here too Sūryavarman is eulogized as a portion of Śiva (*Śiva-aṃśa*).[123] This testimony is important for the reason that the inscription begins with an invocation to Śiva in which refernce is made to the portions (*aṃśa*) which must be familiar to those who strive for salvation. Included among these portions of Śiva is, surprisingly, the "ruler's self" (*niyoktrātman*).

---

[120] For Rajendravarman also the claim was made in an inscription of 948 A.D. that he was a "portion" of Śiva (*ayam mama-aṃśo bhūmīśaḥ*); see inscription of Prasat Pram, A XIX (G. Coedès, 1913, "Etudes cambodgiennes. X. Inscription de Prasat Pram", in: *BEFEO*, XIII, 6, p. 19).

[121] Lovek inscription of Harṣavarman III, śloka XXXVII; R.C. Majumdar, 1953, p. 423. See also Ta Keo inscription, A 5-6 (G. Coedès, 1931, "Etudes Cambodgiennes XXVII. La date du Baphuon", in: *BEFEO*, XXXI, p. 18).

[122] *īśvarasya kṣitau vaddha-mūrti*. Stele of Tūol Ta Pec (K. 834), śloka XCII (*IC*, V, p. 256).

[123] Inscription of Prasat Khna (K. 661), B, śloka LXI (*IC*, I, p. 202). While in Cambodia the king is exalted as the "fixed image" of the god on earth, in Orissa even to modern times he bears the name *Calanti Viṣṇu* (*Record of Rights*), published by the government of Orissa in 1955. As the "Moving Viṣṇu" he is the deputy for the "fixed" Viṣṇu-Jagannātha in the temple. The name *Calanti Viṣṇu* in Orissa does not in any way - as one might at first suppose - embody a divinization of the king as the great god Viṣṇu. Here, too, it is simply a question of a functional similarity between the state divinity and the king of the state. As such he functions as the former's *rāuta* (deputy) and is as *bhakta* its "first servant" (*sebaka*). Moreover it has to be mentioned that the title *Calanti Viṣṇu* does not occur in any source prior to 1955.

What is the relationship between the *aṃśa*, the "ruler's self" of the god Śiva, with King Sūryavarman, who for his part is euolgized in the same inscription as an *aṃśa* of Śiva?[124] It is very probable that in the tenth and eleventh centuries the kings of Angkor were extolled as *aṃśa* of Śiva, and that this *aṃśa* of the god was seen in direct association with the *aṃśa* of Śiva which was eulogized as his "ruler's self".

The reign of Udayādityavarman II (1050-1066 A.D.) also plays an important part in our knowledge of the *devarāja* cult and of the ritual significance of the royal temple mountains of Angkor. For one thing, the Sdok Kak Thoṃ inscription dates from the beginning of his reign (1052 A.D.) - the only source which makes possible any coherent statement about the *devarāja* cult. For another, we find for the first time in inscriptions concerning Udayādityavarman clear epigraphic evidence about the function of the royal *liṅgas* in the state cult of Angkor. Thus, the famous Lovek inscription of the priestly Saptadevakula family, dating from the reign of Harṣavarman III (1066-1080 A.D.), gives a clear account of the cosmographical import of Udayādityavarman's Baphuon temple mountain. From it we learn how Udayādityavarman erected a golden Mountain (the Baphuon) in his own city, vying with the abode of the gods, the golden Mount Meru standing in the middle of Jambudvīpa. On the summit of this golden mountain in a temple resplendent with divine radiance, he consecrated a Śiva-*liṅga* with the name of the "Golden Liṅga".[125] In the Praḥ Nok inscription, General Saṃgrāma sought permission to endow this golden *liṅga*, which harboured within itself the "subtle inner self" of Udayādityavarman, with his spoils of war.[126]

---

[124] It is not to be ruled out that we see here the influence of the Buddhist *bodhisattva* ideal, as it is the supreme task of the *bodhisattva* to obtain the salvation of all men - an idea which is alien to the Śaivite conception of royalty in the eleventh century.

[125] Lovek inscription of Harṣavarman III, verses 40-43; R.C. Majumdar, 1953, *Inscriptions of Kambuja*, Calcutta, p. 4. Similarly, Inscription of Phnoṃ Sandak and Praḥ Vihār, line 9 (G. Coedès and P. Dupont, 1943/46 [see footnote 70], p. 141).

[126] Praḥ Nok Stele inscription, verse 159 (R.C. Majumdar, 1953 [see footnote 125], p. 398).

Here, in a few lines, we find in epitome the apotheosis of the ruler in eleventh century Angkor. The "subtle inner self" of the king ("le roi abstrait" according to Finot) dwells in a *liṅga*, the phallic manifestation of the god Śiva, which a king has consecrated in the course of his reign in a temple mountain, and which is a guarantee of fecundity and strength. When the kings of Angkor are exalted as a "portion" (*aṃśa*) of the god Śiva, it appears that this portion and the "subtle inner self" of the king are one and the same.[127] Hence the god Śiva and the king of Angkor are united in a *liṅga* upon the topmost step of a temple pyramid which constitutes a microcosmic replica of Mount Meru, the abode of the gods, and represents the centre of the Angkorian Kingdom. Now, as "fixed image" of Śiva on earth, the king of Angkor in his capacity as "lord of the earth" (*kamrateṅ phdai karoṃ*) wields dominion on behalf of the "lord of the world who is [the possessor of] sovereignty" (*kamrateṅ jagat ta rājya*, and *devarājya*). After his death the king enters the region (*pada*) of the highest god.

Whereas these inscriptional data concerning the divinization of the kings of Angkor have in the past been regularly applied directly to the *devarāja* cult, it should now be apparent from the testimony of the passages cited above that they refer exclusively to the cult of the royal *liṅgas* on the temple pyramids of Angkor.[128] The only conclusion that can be drawn is that it was these *liṅgas* and their temples, and not the *devarāja*, which were the focus of the state cult. These *liṅgas* on the temple mountains were the

---

[127] In the Pre Rup foundation inscription of 961 A.D., it is said of the *liṅga* in the southeast of the upper platform of the temple that King Rājendravarman "erected the Lord (Īśvara) Rājendravarmeśvara for his own salvation, just as if it were itself imbued with the royal essence" (*IC*, I, p. 102, verse CCLVIII).

[128] It is apparent also in the case of the *liṅga* of the Baphuon that it was not, as G. Coedès among others supposed (G. Coedès, 1931 [see footnote 121], p. 22), the *devarāja*. In the Khmer section of the inscription of Lovek mentioned above, the reference is clearly made to the *kamrateṅ jagat survarṇaliṅga* (*IC*, VI, p. 285, line 17), and the inscriptions of Phnoṃ Sandak and Praḥ Vihār speak of a *kamrateṅ añ survarṇaliṅga* which King Udayādityavarman caused to be erected (G. Coedès/P. Dupont, 1943/46 [see footnote 70], p. 141, line 10).

visible manifestation of the god Śiva.[129] Here "dwelled" the "ruler's self" belonging to the god, which was lodged in the reigning king of Angkor as his "subtle inner self". Through this connection, the king of Angkor became "participant" in the divine rule of Śiva.

VI. Conclusion

It has been the object of the foregoing discussion to call into question the previous explanation of the *devarāja* cult as a cult of the divinized ruler, and thus to work out with greater clarity the role of the *devarāja* cult in the legitimating system governing Angkorian kingship. At the same time, a fresh examination of the Sdok Kak Thoṃ inscription has shown that the *devarāja* cult can in no way be identified with the cult of the royal *liṅgas*. In the first instance this requirement confines us almost exclusively to the Sdok Kak Thoṃ inscription. Most of the other sources which have previously been seen as sources for the *devarāja* cult[130] concern the Tribhuvaneśvara *liṅga* on the Prasat Thoṃ temple mountain in Koḥ Ker, and so do not qualify as evidence about the *devarāja* cult.

---

[129] There can be no doubt that, from the time when the idea became current that the king was an *aṃśa* of Śiva, the kings of Angkor increasingly preferred to name their royal *liṅgas* explicitly as the *liṅga* of the god Śiva, and so they forbore to associate their own names with the *liṅgas*. The royal dominion of the "lord of the world" had to be "unbounded", if the legitimation of the king as *aṃśa* of Śiva was to be seen to be efficacious.

[130] See G. Coedès/P. Dupont, 1943/46 (see footnote 23), p. 64. Still unclear is the explanation of verse VI of the inscription, dating from the years 877 and 879 A.D., commemorating the foundation of the Praḥ Kō temple built by Indravarman. In it there is reference to the divine rule (*devarājya*) of Mahendra which was established by Svayaṃbhū (Brahmā). This verse is often seen as an allusion to the foundation of the *devarāja* cult on Mahendraparvata (G. Coedès, *IC*, I, p. 25, note 1; P. Dupont, 1952, "Les débuts de la royauté angkorienne", in: *BEFEO*, XLVI, 1, pp. 171, 175; K. Bhattacharya, 1964, "Recherches sur le vocabulaire des inscriptions sanskrites du Cambodge", in: *BEFEO*, LII, p. 45). In spite of an ambiguity which is undeniably inherent in the text, the term *devarājya* is more likely to refer the "Great Indra" (Mahendra) whose "dominion over the gods" had been founded by Brahmā. By this same rite, the inscription says, King Indravarman ("he whose protection is Indra") was consecrated. After this consecration Indravarman acquired [earthly!] dominion (*labdharājya*, verse VII). Certainly, there is in addition an allusion to Śiva, the "true" king of the gods, and his dominion, in the sense demonstrated by J. Filliozat. A direct allusion to the foundation of the *devarāja* cult would on the other hand be difficult to prove.

From the Sdok Kak Thoṃ inscription we learn that the magic ritual enactment of the presumably tantric consecration took place on Mount Mahendraparvata. The object of this solemn ceremony was, firstly, to free Cambodia from dependence on Java and to consecrate King Jayavarman II as sole earthly universal ruler (*cakravartin*) of Cambodia. Secondly, at the same time that the kingdom was founded by this solemn rite, the *devarāja* was consecrated. The inscription now leaves no doubt that the king of Cambodia was not, as previously believed, consecrated as god-king. On the contrary, this consecration took place around an image of the god Śiva, who, as "god, who is king" and as "lord of the world", protected the kings of Cambodia (as "lords of the earth"). After making an examination of the Sdok Kak Thoṃ inscription, and appealing to Indian parallels, we may draw the initially hypothetical conclusion that Jayavarman caused a *liṅga* to be consecrated on Mahendraparvata, and that a movable image (*calantī pratimā*) of this was made and venerated as the *devarāja* in the successive capitals of the kingdom at least up to the eleventh century.

The state ceremony of Mahendraparvata at the beginning of the ninth century preeminently facilitated the achievement of a domestic policy objective. According to the recent researches of Jacques and Wolters, the solemn consecration was preceded by decades of struggle by Jayavarman for mastery in Cambodia. By the "political sacrifice"[131] on Mount Mahendra Jayavarman elevated himself, after substantial territorial gains, to the status of sole *cakravartin* ruler of Cambodia. This explanation of the *devarāja* cult as a *unique political act* on the occasion of the territorial unification of Cambodia would make sense of the relatively trivial significance of the *devarāja* cult in the following centuries,[132] when the

---

131 "The political sacrifices were the concrete mechanism not only for obtaining the blessings of the gods but also for asserting the political power of the king." V.P. Varma, 1959 (see footnote 19), p. 222.

132 This necessarily hypothetical contention is based on the striking fact that *royal* inscriptions scarcely mention the *devarāja* cult at all. The Sdok Kak Thoṃ inscription and presumably that of Śivācārya, on the contrary, originate from the family of Śivakaivalya, to whose benefice the *devarāja* cult is specifically assigned: "Aucun autre texte royal n'en parle." ["No other royal text mentions it."] G. Coedès/P. Dupont, 1943/46 (see footnote 23), p. 64.

principle of the unity of the Angkorian kingdom was no longer in question.[133] There is much to be said for the supposition that a century later the opening regnal years of Jayavarman IV between 921 and 925/928 A.D. contributed to a weakening of the *devarāja* cult. It was the usurper Jayavarman IV who was able to succeed in setting himself up, without the legitimation of the *devarāja*, against the kings of Angkor, whose rule the *devarāja* was supposed to protect. Jayavarman's challenge must have been all the graver when, in the interim, he publicly and deliberately caused to be consecrated a "rival" state divinity in the Tribhuvaneśvara *liṅga* upon the then-highest temple mountain of Cambodia.[134] To this *liṅga*'s service he committed his sovereignty in order to constitute himself a portion (*aṃśa*) of this divinity and thus to possess a higher legitimation than the legal kings of Angkor. The idea of participating as an *aṃśa* of the god in divine lordship (*devarājya*) decisively affected the apotheosis of the ruler in the Angkorian kingdom from the time of Jayavarman IV on. Thereby the king became a participant in divine lordship, without himself being a god.

A further reason for the decline in significance of the esoteric-tantric *devarāja* cult of Śiva, as against the cult of the royal *liṅgas* on central temple mountains, may lie in the growth in the personal power of the kings of Angkor. At the center of the royal temple cult stood *liṅgas* which sometimes bore the names of the kings who endowed them, and which were venerated as abodes of their "subtle inner selves." These indeed constituted the essential royal cult of Angkor. Even in the late period, when Buddhism was already dominant in the Cambodian state cult, the temple mountains were still at the heart of the "state-sustaining" cult. This is what the famous Chinese traveler Chou Ta-kuan reported at the end of the thirteenth century about a ritual union of the king with a snake princess, the "snake mistress of the country", which lasted

---

[133] O.W. Wolters, 1973 (see footnote 25), p. 30: "Local independence was no longer the acceptable objection as it had been in the eighth century. The integrity of the Angkorian kingdom was no longer in question."

[134] From this point of view one could presumably speak of a schism in the *devarāja* cult in the sense employed by L.P. Briggs (see note 111 above).

through the night.[135] This union took place within the palace precincts on a "golden tower", in Phimeanakas. By contrast, the cult potentialities of the *calantī pratimā* of a remote foundation *liṅga*, consecrated generations before, must have paled into insignificance. Indeed, the *devarāja* cult was preserved as one of the sources of magic power, but we may presume that its significance was very markedly diminished in the course of time, and came to approximate that of the holy fire (*vraḥ vleṅ*) or the holy sword (*praeḥ khan*) in the state cult of Angkor.

The fortunate circumstance that the *devarāja* cult is in its broad outline familiar, through the Sdok Kak Thoṃ inscription, we owe presumably to the biography of Sadāśiva, the last *purohita* of the *devarāja* known to us. Sūryavarman I (1002-1050) A.D.) married Sadāśiva to his sister-in-law, withdrew him from religious functions, named him as his royal chaplain (*rājapurohita*), and invested him with one of the highest state offices (D, 44-45). Under Udayādityavarman II he became the king's *guru* and even received the highest royal title *dhūli jeṅ vraḥ kamrateṅ añ* and the name Śrī Jayendravarman. In spite of this dizzy career of Sadāśiva there is no mistaking that his family had forfeited its monopolistic position as the most important priestly family of the kingdom.[136] In its stead, the Saptadevakula priestly family, connected to Sūryavarman I by bonds of kinship, advanced further and further into the foreground under Sūryavarman and his successors. The head of this family, the famous Śaṅkarapaṇḍita, became sacrificial priest (*hotar*) and teacher (*guru*) of Sūryavarman. Under the latter's successor Udayādityavarman he also became the sacrificial priest (*yājaka*) of the "golden *liṅga*" on the Baphuon temple mountain,[137] which (similarly to the Tribhuvaneśvara *liṅga* under Jayavarman IV) stood right at the center of the state cult under Udayādityavarman. The final passing over of the cult in the state sanctuary of the Baphuon

---

[135] R. Heine-Geldern, 1930 (see footnote 11), pp. 37 ff.; P. Pelliot, 1902, "Mémoires sur les coutumes du Cambodge, par Tcheou Ta-kuan", in: *BEFEO*, II, pp. 144 f.

[136] L.P. Briggs, 1951a (see footnote 6), p. 150; idem, 1952 (see footnote 61), p. 178.

[137] Lovek inscription, ślokas 37-43; R.C. Majumdar, 1953 (see footnote 125), pp. 423

seems to have induced Sadāśiva, at the peak of his (no longer temporal) power, to establish, in the Sdok Kak Thoṃ inscription, a lasting monument to the dominant role which his family had played right from the beginning in the state cult of Angkor. However, it was not through the inscription alone that Sadāśiva sought to announce the greatness of his family to future generations. In the small temple in Bhadraniketana (= Sdok Kak Thoṃ) in which the inscription was found, Sadāśiva endowed a Brahmā sculpture for the priest Hiraṇyadāma and a Harihara sculpture jointly for his ancestor Śivakaivalya and the priest Śivāśrama, the co-founder of the Śiva-Āśrama that was so important to the Śivakaivalya family (C, CXXVII). We must agree with Briggs when he describes the temple of Bhadraniketana as a sort of "family pantheon" and the inscription as the "swansong" of the Śivakaivalya family.[138]

In the present state of our knowledge, it seems probable that we should see the endowments of Sadāśiva as the swansong of the *devarāja* cult as well. After 1052 A.D., the date of the Sdok Kak Thoṃ inscription, we hear nothing more of the *devarāja* cult. Certainly it was not "abolished" in the twelfth century; but it was more and more downgraded to the status of a stage property in the royal apparatus of magic power. The fate of the *calantī pratimā* of the *devarāja*, the sometime state palladium of Angkor, may have been finally sealed soon after the overthrow of Angkor by the Chams (1177 A.D.), when Jayavarman VII came to power and, as a convinced Buddhist, had Angkor completely rebuilt. It was no longer the old Śaivite central temple mountain (*vnāṃ kantāl*) of the Bakheṅ that stood at the midpoint of the new city of Angkor Thoṃ, but the Buddhist temple complex of the Bayon. In his inscription Jayavarman declared allegorically that the mountain of Śiva in the Himalayas was uprooted (*unmūlita*), so that new kings had recourse to him, Jayavarman, in order to obtain security. The god Brahmā had fashioned Jayavarman out of a half each from Śiva and Viṣṇu, so that the king thereby surpassed Śiva in majesty and virility. Even more unmistakably, it is said elsewhere that Brahmā took from the god Śiva the power (*śakti*) with which he

[138] L.P. Briggs, 1951 (see footnote 6), p. 170.

had formerly conquered the Tripura demons and handed it over to King Jayavarman.[139]

Indeed it was not only in Cambodia that the Śaivite ideology of legitimation had lost its *śakti* in the twelfth century. In all the states of southern and eastern India as well, Śaivism as an ideology of state experienced a crisis which was generally connected directly or indirectly with the activities of the great Vaiṣṇavite reformer Rāmānuja. Thus, at the beginning of the twelfth century, King Sūryavarman II (ca. 1113-50 A.D.) in Cambodia submitted to the "allure" of Vaiṣṇavism at the same time as Anantavarman Cōḍa-gaṅga, king of Orissa (ca. 1112-46), in eastern India. Both gave up the Śaivite state religion of their forefathers and built their gigantic new state temples in honour of the god Viṣṇu. So, on either side of the Bay of Bengal, huge Vaiṣṇavite temples appeared simultaneously - the Jagannātha temple of Puri, in Orissa, and Angkor Wat. In Orissa and large parts of India, however, Vaiṣṇa-vism increasingly succeeded during the following centuries in adapting itself to the popular *bhakti* cults, and thus resolved the legitimation crisis in the Hindu realm, whereas Cambodia was no longer affected by this mediaeval reform movement in Indian Hinduism.

After the devastating defeat of Angkor in 1177, Jayavarman VII inherited a realm in which Śiva's mountain of the gods, the Hindu symbol of the temporal dominion of Angkor's earlier kings, was uprooted.[140] Misconstruing the "Indian" signs of the times, he adopted the path of the esoteric Mahāyāna Buddhist Lokeśvara cult, and saddled the population of his state with a form of royal apotheosis that was so far unknown. Having covered his kingdom with a network of temples, statues of gods, and hospitals in a frenzy of missionary zeal, he expressed his compassion for suffer-ing humanity in the moving language of his inscriptions. But his words could no longer reach a people afflicted by wars and

---

[139] Inscriptions of Prasat Chruṅ, Angkor Thoṃ (K. 281, K. 288), *IC*, IV, pp. 207-50.

[140] The reason why the night-long ritual union between the snake princess and the king upon the Phimeanakas, described by Chou Ta-kuan at the end of the thirteenth century, had such a long continuous history may lie in the "pre-Hindu" origin of the snake mythology which can be traced back through the Funan empire to the foundation legend of Cambodia; see R. Heine-Geldern, 1930 (see footnote 11), pp. 37 f.

compulsory labour. The people, exhausted by the burden which the Hindu apotheosis of the ruler and its later Buddhist form placed upon them, turned to the Ceylonese Theravāda Buddhism which from the end of the twelfth century began to spread across Burma to the rest of mainland Southeast Asia.

Postscriptum (1978)

After the publication of the original German article in 1974, I received several encouraging communications from friends and colleagues and further suggestions. A very important supplementary reference I owe to Dr. Friedhelm Hardy, London, who drew my attention to the fact that in South India *devarāja* was also a rare but well-known name of Viṣṇu (e.g. of Varadarājapperumāḷ in Kanchipuram). It was precisely in the eleventh century, when the name *devarāja* was used for the first time in Cambodia in the famous Sdok Kak Thoṃ inscription, that Tirukacci Nampi composed a hymn on Varadarāja under the title of "Devarājāṣṭakam". Hardy thus fully corroborates J. Filliozat's arguments pointing out that (in the context of the ninth century's South Indian Śaivism) "Devarāja, meaning 'king of gods', designates Śiva himself" and not the kings of Cambodia.

I am very much obliged to the Centre of South East Asian Studies of the School of Oriental and African Studies and its members for giving me, in February 1977, the opportunity of a thorough discussion of the problems of the *devarāja* cult. I am particularly grateful to Mrs. J. M. Jacob. As my former teacher in Old Khmer she took the trouble to read most thoroughly the German version and its English translation. In connection with the Khmer text of the Sdok Kak Thoṃ inscription she suggested a few slight alterations to its translation and wrote some notes on key Khmer expressions (see Appendix).

Perhaps the two most important key expressions referred to by her are *man* and *daiy*. I have argued that the transfer of the *devarāja* from Roulos to the newly established capital at Angkor and the consecration of the "personal" royal *liṅga* on the central temple mountain (Bakheṅ) were two distinct actions by Yaśovarman (899-900), which are clearly separated in the Sdok Kak Thoṃ inscription (D, 12) by the word *man*. I translated it with "*dann*" in the sense of "*darauf*" (then), which indicates a time interval between the two actions. Mrs. J. M. Jacob's interpretation of *man*, however, does not exclude a synchronism. But still there is the fact that the consecration (*sthāpanā*) of the "holy *liṅga* at the centre" (*vraḥ liṅga*

āy kantāl) is described in a separate sentence (D, 13; see above, notes 76 and 80).

The expression *daiy* "various(ly)", "different(ly)" is one of the most crucial of the Khmer portion of the Sdok Kak Thoṃ inscription. To some extent it depends on its translation in C, 81 whether there existed *various devarājas*, an interpretation which would lead again to Coedès' theory of an identity between the *devarāja* and the various "personal" *liṅgas* on the temple mountains. But it has been shown that Coedès in his most famous article on the *devarāja* cult (1952) brought the word *daiy* in relation with *kamrateṅ jagat ta rāja (= devarāja)*. Therefore he spoke in this article of "*les divers rois-dieux*", whereas in the translation of the relevant portion of the Sdok Kak Thoṃ inscription together with P. Dupont, he had written in 1943/46: "*Le dieu-roi* changea de résidence suivant les capitales où le monarque le conduisit". In her note in the Appendix Mrs. J. M. Jacob shows it to be highly probable that *daiy* has to be understood as some sort of pluralizer of the capitals (*nagara*) in which the kings variously stayed. Consequently the *kamrateṅ jagat ta rāja* should be understood as an "idole unique".

Finally, a statement of the article needs some correction. I have written that "after 1052 A.D., the date of the Sdok Kak Thoṃ inscription, we hear nothing more of the *devarāja* cult". However, one inscription of the late twelfth century at the Bayon mentions the *kamrateṅ jagat ta rāja*.[1] In his article on the *devarāja*, I. W. Mabbett, following G. Coedès, has already mentioned these inscriptions which list obviously the various sculptures which once stood in the chambers of the Bayon temple.[2] G. Coedès concluded from this inscription that the *devarāja* seems to have been relegated to a chapel in the outside galleries, although the Bayon itself must have been associated with the cult of the king.[3] It is a pity that I had missed this inscription when I wrote the German version of the present article in 1973. This inscription, I am sure, verifies beyond

---

[1] G. Coedès, "La date du Bayon. Appendice. Les inscriptions du Bayon", in: *BEFEO*, XXVIII (1928), pp. 81-112 (inscriptions, pp. 104-12).

[2] I. W. Mabbett, "Devarāja", p. 209.

[3] G. Coedès, "La date du Bayon", p. 100.

doubt the hypothesis that the famous *devarāja* of the Angkor period was a *single sculpture* which was the *calantī pratimā* or substitute of the *liṅga* which had been installed by Jayavarman II on the Mahendragiri in 802. This is corroborated by the fact that the same inscription which mentions the *devarāja* lists also the names of other deities whose temples are outside Angkor: e.g. *kamrateṅ jagat chok gargyar* and the *kamrateṅ jagat śambhupura*.[4] These names can refer to nothing else but to *calantī pratimās* or substitutes for the deities of Koḥ Ker and Sambor which had been brought with miscellaneous other sculptures to the Bayon, which had become the new state temple of Angkor in the late twelfth century.

[4] Ibid., p. 105, inscription No. 2.

Appendix
Notes on the translation of the Khmer text

By J. Jacob

man is not really equivalent to an adverb or adverbial phrase such as "*alors*", "*damals*", "at that time". It needs to be understood (though not necessarily translated) as a conjunction introducing a subordinate clause, "whereas, inasmuch as, in that, which, when". On C, 70 "*man vraḥmaṇa*...mok...pi..." may be literally translated as "In-that a Brahman...came, it-was-because...". Similarly on D, 12 "*man vraḥ pāda cat*..., *nāṃ*..." may be understood as "When His Majesty founded..., he took...". On C, 74 it must be translated as "which".

leḥ C, 72. This word may be understood by refernce to Modern Khmer *mleḥ* "so, like that".

syaṅ C, 74. In spite of the Modern Khmer meaning "almost", in Old and Middle Khmer this word implies plurality, often linking a remote plural subject to a following verb. Here it gathers up the list of texts, "all of" which the Brahman recited.

kuruṅ C, 78, occurs as a verb "to govern".

nā C, 77. "at, (place or time), with reference to, in respect of, when, where". Note that on D, 5 *nā* occurs in combination with *ᵃnau* "at, remain". In occurrences where "*kamrateṅ jagat ta rāja*" follows, it might be translated "in connection with" just as well as by the more precise "*aupres de*", "*vor*" or "in the presence of".

daiy C, 81. "various(ly), different(ly)". In this sentence, "*daiy*" seems to need to be construed as follows: "the *kamrateṅ jagat ta rāja* stayed *variously/in different places* according-to the cities to-which the lord of the world below, he

(particle) took (him) there also". Note that *tadaiy* on D, 17 and 25 is the form which means "other".

nāṃ D, 12. "*nāṃ*...*yok duk*". *nāṃ* "take" usually has a person as object. *yok* "take" usually has a thing as object. "*duk*" means "put in the proper place, put away, keep".

INDEX

Hermann Kulke is Professor of South and Southeast Asian History in the Department of History, Kiel University. After receiving his Ph.D in Indology from Freiburg University in 1967 he taught for 21 years at the Southasia Institute of the Heidelberg University. He was founder-member of the Orissa Research Project of the Southasia Institute (1970-1975), Visiting Professor at Utkal University, Bhubaneswar (1978/79), Asiatic Society, Calcutta (1986) and Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi (1992) and Fellow of the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore (1987). He is author of *Cidambaramāhātmya* (1970), *Jagannātha Cult and Gajapati Kingship* (1979 both in German), co-author of *A History of India* (1986, with D. Rothermund), co-editor of *The Cult of Jagannath and the Regional Tradition of Orissa* (1978, with A. Eschmann and G.C. Tripathi; Manohar) and of *Hinduism Reconsidered* (1989, with G.D. Sontheimer; Manohar) and editor of *The State in India 1000-1600* (1993; OUP, India)

ISBN 81-7304-037-0

RELATED MANOHAR TITLES

NANCY GARDNER CASSELS
Religion and Pilgrim Tax under the Company Raj

P. MUKHERJEE
History of Chaitanya Faith in Orissa

ALF HILTEBEITEL (ed)
Criminal Gods and Demon·Devotees;
Essays on Guardians of Popular Hinduism

A. ESCHMANN et. al. (eds.)
The Cult of Jagannath and the Regional Tradition of Orissa

BISWAMOY PATI
Peasants, Tribals and National Movement in Orissa 1920-50

W. G. LACEY
Census of India 1931: Bihar and Orissa, 2 Parts